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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE chances of a peaceful coal settlement are not increasing. The owners and the miners met in conference last week; with the result that two communications were made public: (1) A detailed statement of the owners' attitude towards the Coal Commission's Report and (2) a brief comment by the Miners' Federation Executive indicating that their next move would be to confer with the Industrial Committee of the Trades Union Congress. The owners' statement was studiously "correct." They treat those of the Commission's recommendations which call for Government action as the business of the Government and of Parliament; they "take note" of the Government's offer to carry out the necessary measures and promise "to conform" to them. They then run through the recommendations in detail, and make a fair showing of accepting those which primarily concern them, though, not unnaturally, their answers become vague on the most material points. For example, as regards the proposal that co-operative selling agencies should be set up, especially in the export trade, in order to secure better prices, the Mining Association "will recommend that the districts should give careful and immediate consideration to the measures which can best be taken to promote this object." Clearly this does not amount to very much; but clearly also it would not be easy for a body like the Mining Association to promise anything very definite on such a matter at this stage. In general, so far as the reconstruction side of the Report is concerned, though the owners' statement does not carry us much further, and though everything depends on the spirit in which they would translate their phrases into action, they have at least uttered the right sort of phrases and have avoided the mistake of putting themselves wrong with public opinion by an *intransigent* attitude.

But the crucial question is, of course, that of wages. The statement of the Miners' Federation complains that "the owners, as a national body, refused to disclose their intentions regarding wages, or to intimate what they

proposed should be paid to the workmen at the beginning of May. . . . They did inform us, however, that there would be heavy reductions." And the answer is made that the wages of the miners are so low already that they cannot consent to any further reduction. If we had to take this declaration literally, the situation would be hopeless; for, in face of the Commission's Report, showing, on the one hand, that the industry cannot afford the present wages and, on the other, that miners' wages compare very favourably, both absolutely and by reference to pre-war standards, with those in other depressed industries, it is idle to expect that these wages can be maintained. But, reading between the lines, it is evident that the principle of no wage reduction is not the real stumbling-block. The immediate trouble is the question of procedure—the old issue of national *versus* district negotiations. So long as the owners attempt to make wages a matter of district negotiations, the miners will stick to their "no reduction" formula; but they are ready to consider a detailed proposal on a national basis; that seems to be the gist of the Federation's real attitude.

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Now, up to a point, the owners can claim, on this matter also, to be acting in accord with the Commission's Report. For, while the Commissioners upheld the *principle* of national negotiation, they suggested a particular procedure for it. That procedure is that the two sides should first meet nationally to determine the general principles of agreement, that appropriate minima for the various districts should then be negotiated locally, and finally that these district minima should be submitted to the national conference for approval and, if need be, for revision. And this procedure the owners declare themselves ready to follow. But, as a matter of fact, the Commission did not advise this procedure in a very decided way. That the parties should first meet in national conference—they were emphatic about that. The subsequent reference to district negotiations they merely threw out as "a reasonable course" to follow, adding that this must depend on the

decisions taken nationally. And it can hardly be supposed that the Commission would approve an obstinate refusal on the owners' part to discuss figures nationally, if the miners stick out for that method. If it must come to a conflict, at least let us know what is the size of the gulf that separates the two parties. The owners would be well-advised to submit a schedule of new district minima, and to keep that schedule within the limits indicated by the Commission. Then we might make progress towards a settlement, and the public would at least be able to form an opinion on the merits of the dispute.

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On the last day of the session, Mr. Ponsonby drew from Mr. Locker-Lampson, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a tolerably clear statement as to the Government's attitude towards the forthcoming preliminary Conference on disarmament. Mr. Locker-Lampson, quite rightly, emphasized the complexity and delicacy of the problems before the Preparatory Commission. Hardly any replies have yet been received to the questionnaire on private manufacture of armaments, and over all the preparations for the conference hangs the shadow of the Russian abstention, which must profoundly affect the attitude of the border States. On the other hand, Mr. Locker-Lampson was able to give a large measure of reassurance to those who feared that the British Government were going into the conference without any clear conception of what they hoped to accomplish. He stated categorically that Lord Cecil would go to Geneva prepared to urge a definite scheme of disarmament, and that a committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Cecil himself, was at work on a report which would guide the Government in framing his instructions. In view of recent events, this statement will be received with extreme satisfaction.

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The attempt on Mussolini's life by an unbalanced lady of Anglo-Irish "governing-class" extraction comes at a moment and in circumstances when it may inflame very ugly passions. From the first, the gravest aspect of the Fascist régime has been the potential menace which it constitutes to international peace; and the replacement of Signor Farinacci by Signor Turati as Secretary-General of the Fascist Party is understood to mark the opening of a new phase of policy—some relaxation on the one hand of the rigidity of the domestic tyranny, and the enlistment of enthusiasm in a glittering and aggressive foreign policy. The Fascist Press has recently been proclaiming the virility of Italy and the decadence of other States in a style faithfully reminiscent of the worst type of pre-war Prussian professor. "Fascism," declares the *AVANTI*, "is now really seeking for an outlet outside Italy." Through the fog of oratory looms up the battleship "Conti di Cavour," bearing El Duce to Tripoli. What does it all mean? It is only clear that there must be some sort of reckoning with Fascism before the world's peace can be held to be reasonably assured. Meanwhile a general anti-foreigner feeling is being inculcated, and it is likely to receive an unfortunate stimulus from Miss Gibson's attempt to emulate Charlotte Corday.

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The Home Secretary's decision to license two-seater taxi-cabs in London has had an interesting sequel. The various existing taxi-cab interests, the proprietors, the drivers, and the owner-drivers have joined together in a covenant to fight the new vehicle. Drivers are advised to refuse to drive the two-seaters, while garage proprietors who take them in are threatened with a boycott by the existing trade. The view is expressed

in a manifesto that "there is a sporting chance that we may beat them (the two-seaters) yet." All this will add to the interest which will be felt when the two-seaters at length appear in the London streets, which they are not expected to do until some six months' time. But the four-seater interests are unlikely to command much public sympathy, or at any rate support. There never was, indeed, a clearer case of the issue between vested interests and the public welfare. The public demand for taxi conveyance is, in a large part, a two-seater demand; and it is admitted that a two-seater taxi can supply this demand at a cheaper rate than the present type can do. The suggestion that this development should be vetoed, because a great deal of capital has been sunk in the existing cabs, is really an outrageous suggestion. The same logic would have prohibited the introduction of motor-cabs at all (which cut out the horse-cab), of motor-omnibuses, of railways, indeed of every one of the new inventions which are the feature of the modern age. Sir William Joynson-Hicks is to be congratulated on standing to his guns.

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The report of the Permanent Mandates Commission upon the report of the French Government upon the administration of Syria, is a document of exceptional interest and importance. The principal criticism at present directed against the French Government is that it has been extremely negligent in collecting and presenting the information required by the League. Between September, 1923, when the mandate came into force, and October, 1925, the Mandates Commission received two reports from Paris, neither of which gave any information about the disturbances in the Lebanon: the report which has just been examined by the Mandates Commission was only sent in reply to an urgent request; and now the Commission regretfully reports that the document supplied "does not fulfil its expectations, and contains lacunæ not only in its statement upon the immediate causes of the present risings, but also in regard to the deeper causes of an unrest which had in no way been brought out in the reports for preceding years." We intend shortly to deal at greater length with the report and its criticisms; and, be it added, with French reticence upon the whole matter.

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The semi-official reports upon the Moroccan peace negotiations continue to be as mysterious and baffling as the inspired comment upon them. One thing, at all events, is fairly clear. Abd-el-Krim has approached the French Government, and there are symptoms of a disagreement between Madrid and Paris. The reasons for it are easily understood. France's concern with Abd-el-Krim is bounded by purely military considerations; an arrangement which gives her security on the Wergha front, and relieves her of the necessity of guarding the communications between Algeria and Morocco gives her all she requires. Spain's case is different. Abd-el-Krim is master of a large portion of Spanish Morocco; and considerations of sovereignty must necessarily affect the final settlement between the Rifi leader and the Directorate. Spain doubtless is striving for an arrangement which gives her permanent security in the occupied, and special opportunities in the unoccupied, zone. These special opportunities, which necessarily involve definite derogations of Rifan autonomy, are probably the chief difficulty.

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The new Viceroy of India has not been left long without a reminder of the difficulties that confront him. Lord Irwin's arrival synchronized with the outbreak of the most serious Hindu-Moslem riots that Calcutta has

seen for many years; savage attacks were made on mosques and temples, and troops had to be called out to reinforce the police before order was restored. The most deplorable feature of the outbreak is the effect it may have on the progress of constitutional reform. The extremists of the Swaraj party are already turning it to account by a vicious attack on the police for their inability to quell the riots at the outset, and their refusal to accept the aid of Congress volunteers. The die-hards, on the other hand, will use the riots—as they used to use orange and green disturbances in Ireland—as an argument for resisting every step towards self-government. The most hopeful news is that Mr. Sen Gupta, the Mayor of Calcutta, has called a meeting of the leaders of all communities to consider means for preventing the desecration of places of worship. If the community leaders can agree on a workable plan, and if their hold on their followers is strong enough to ensure its application, they will have done the cause of Indian reform good service.

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If General Pangalos's triumphant communiqués are to be believed, we may assume that the Greek electorate is inclined to give his experiment in constitutional absolutism a good start. He has apparently been given a 90 per cent. majority in the ten districts in which elections have been held; and has invited his opponents to count the ballot. In spite of these encouraging results, we are inclined to withhold our congratulations until we know a little more about the manner in which the elections have been held; the current reports of it are most baffling and mysterious, and we give them as they stand. "The Government," it is stated, "decided to hold the presidential elections in only ten divisions last Sunday, and to postpone the elections in the remaining twenty-three divisions until Sunday week, on the grounds that the polling arrangements were not complete. The leaders of the opposition protested against this and advised their supporters to abstain from voting." We feel bound to inquire why this reasonable proposal aroused such bitter opposition; and hazard as a guess that this mysterious "completing" of the polling arrangements is at the root of the trouble.

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It was clear from the first that the Catalan problem was probably the most difficult question with which the Spanish Directorate would have to deal; and that it was one which they were ill qualified to solve. A devolutionary movement, expressing itself through literary and historical associations, and historical pamphlets, was just the kind of problem which would arouse the arbitrary instincts of a junta of Castilian generals, whose notions of good government did not go beyond an honest and highly centralized administration. Primo de Rivera's suppression of the Mancomunidad was an early confirmation of this view. News which is now leaking through shows that there has been no revision of Directorate policy; and that one bad measure has been followed by many others. We now hear of police measures against the Catalan bar, of influential citizens exiled to distant villages; and of the postponement of the royal visit to Catalonia. The Directorate would do well to remember that it started with Catalan support; and that an exasperated public opinion in the northern eastern province may always be the starting point of a counter-revolution.

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The desultory bombardment of Peking by aeroplanes appears to be a particularly silly as well as a wicked performance. It can have no possible military effect, and it is not calculated to win sympathy for Wu Pei-Fu, either from the Chinese or from the Powers, whose repre-

sentatives are in the city for the purposes of the Tariff and Extra-Territoriality Commissions. The attacks are the more senseless as the evacuation of the city by the Kuominchun forces has already begun, and negotiations are in progress between Wu Pei-Fu and the Kuominchun leaders. The basis of negotiations appears to be that Wu should take the place of Feng Yu-hsiang as leader of the first Kuominchun army, which is tolerably efficient, and disband the remainder of the so-called National forces. If Wu could obtain the approval of the Central Government, and retain the support of Chang Tso-lin, there might be some prospect of a stable administration with whom the problems of fiscal reform and extra-territoriality could be effectively discussed. At present the Chief Executive, who is naturally suspicious of Wu, is said to disapprove, and the attitude of Chang, who has hitherto refused any compromise with the Kuominchun, remains very doubtful.

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Care is being taken to prevent Lord Buckmaster's resolution on birth control from being handicapped by the short notice which was given to Mr. Thurtle's Bill in the House of Commons. The resolution has already been on the table longer than a month, and will not be taken until the end of April. Lord Buckmaster asks that instructions and conditions imposed on welfare committees for the purpose of causing them to withhold information on the best methods of limiting families when sought by married women, should be withdrawn. These terms indicate more clearly than did Mr. Thurtle's Bill the injustice of the present situation and the necessity of bringing political pressure to bear upon the Ministry of Health. Much in the House of Lords, of course, depends upon the attitude of the Bishops, and there is reason to believe that at least a few of the more "modern" of them will vote for the resolution. Its careful terms may also dispel the prejudice of many peers that the matter is not one of political importance. The Women's National Liberal Federation has bestirred itself on the matter, anxious no doubt that the illiberal votes recorded by Sir John Simon, Mr. Runciman, and Sir Godfrey Collins against the second reading of Mr. Thurtle's Bill shall not be taken as representing the official attitude of the party. On the motion of Mrs. Spring-Rice and Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, the executive committee of the W.N.L.F. have decided to send a whip to all the Liberal peers in support of the Bill. Their view is that every woman is entitled to the best medical knowledge available, whether it is to be obtained from private sources or from public welfare centres.

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The Liberal Summer School returns this year to Oxford, and is to be held a week earlier than usual, namely, from July 23rd to July 30th, in order not to clash with the British Association, which assembles there in the first week of August. There will be the customary ornamental features, such as an inaugural address by Lord Oxford and a valedictory speech by Mr. Lloyd George, and the list of sessional chairmen includes the names of Sir John Simon, Mr. Walter Runciman, Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, and Mrs. Wintringham. A wide range of interests is to be covered by the papers to be read by authorities on their subject, from foreign politics with "Locarno, Geneva, and the Future of Europe," to domestic politics with "Coal" and the "Finance of Education." Mr. W. T. Layton, Lord Meston, Mr. Ramsay Muir, and Professor Graham Wallas are among the names of the lecturers. The enrolment fee is 10s. as usual, and those wishing to attend the School should apply to Colonel Tweed, 28, Grosvenor Mansions, 82, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

THE FINANCIAL PROSPECT

MR. CHURCHILL'S plight supplies an excellent example of the danger of setting up for yourself false standards of achievement. When he introduced his first Budget nearly a year ago, the feature which struck us immediately was the astonishing incoherence of its conception. A new ambitious scheme for Widows' and Old Age Pensions, launched in the setting of the restoration of the Gold Standard; glowing periods on social reform, coupled with an absurdly exaggerated diagnosis of the bad effects of a high level of direct taxation—we watched it all with something of the same sickening feeling with which one might watch a man in a tree busily sawing off the bough on which he is seated. And when, on the first creaking of the bough, Mr. Baldwin began to advocate subsidies in a general way as a means of reviving depressed industries, it became evident that the dénouement would not be long delayed. We are now accordingly in the full tide of an "anti-waste" reaction; and that indigestible concoction, misnamed the Economy Bill, is the chief pre-occupation of Parliament at the moment. It is a measure which has few admirers, and among all the various achievements of Mr. Churchill's kaleidoscopic Ministerial career, there is probably none which has given him less satisfaction than this, the principal result of his labours of the last few months.

It is important, however, that we should not be misled by Mr. Churchill's evident embarrassment into forming a distorted notion of the real financial position. Unsatisfactory as that position is, it is nothing like so formidable as it is commonly assumed to be. The public generally is under the impression that, unless very special and drastic steps are taken, Mr. Churchill is likely to be faced with a heavy deficit for the ensuing financial year—indeed, that, even with his Economy Bill, he will find it hard to make ends meet without imposing fresh taxation. In all the circumstances, this is a very natural impression; for it is the obvious inference from the arguments which Ministers employ in defence of their economy proposals. Indeed, it is more than an inference. Mr. Baldwin expressly warned the country in his speech at the Hotel Cecil that "unless great economies are secured" increased taxation would become inevitable "this year or next."

This, however, is to exaggerate the seriousness of the situation. It is true that for the first time since 1919 the financial year has ended with a heavy deficit, and that this deficit has only been kept down to £14 millions by bringing into the accounts during the last few days of the year a substantial sum, under the heading of Special Miscellaneous Receipts, which clearly represents one of the nest-eggs which the Treasury keep in reserve to save appearances in emergency. But the realized deficit or the surplus of one year is not carried forward automatically to the next. The Budgets of recent years have yielded large surpluses which have gone to the repayment of debt; so that in fact we have been paying off debt at a much higher rate than that provided by the Statutory Sinking Fund. In these circumstances, there is nothing really shocking in the fact that the net repayment of debt in the year just ended should have fallen for once below the prescribed level of £50 millions. Mr. Churchill must, of course, provide out of revenue for the two months of the coal subsidy which fall to be paid in the new financial year; he must further keep an ample margin in hand to defray the cost of such extension of the subsidy as must be anticipated. But if he does this, there is no compelling reason why he should budget to cover last year's

deficit; and there is certainly no justification for raiding the National Insurance Funds or for slowing down educational development in the pursuit of such a purpose.

But if we thus leave last year's deficit out of the reckoning, there is no danger whatever of a prospective deficit for the coming year, barring only the possibility which Mr. Churchill excludes in all his calculations, of a prolonged and calamitous industrial dispute. It is true that the tax remissions of last year have still to take their full effect, and also that despite Mr. Churchill's efforts the predominant tendency is for expenditure to grow. But there is a still more powerful tendency on the other side, namely, the steady annual increase of revenue which a given level of taxation yields. Beneath all our economic difficulties, beneath the troubles of the export trades, and the waste of a large portion of our productive power in unemployment and idle plant, the economic progress of the country is still continuing. Year by year we become richer and richer in wealth per head, and still more in aggregate wealth; and the yield of most of our taxes expands accordingly. The Treasury last year estimated the buoyancy of the revenue at 4 per cent., and this assumption has been realized. The normal buoyancy cannot be put so high as this; for the disappearance of a bad trading year from the three years' income tax average was a factor in the above calculation. But, allowing for this, it would seem reasonable and even conservative to assume for the future a buoyancy of 2 per cent. or rather more.

Now this is a factor of primary importance which must be borne in mind in all discussions of financial policy. It means for the present year that on the basis of existing taxation we can expect an expansion of the revenue of from £16 millions to £20 millions. When we add to this such items as the Italian Debt annuity, and the increase in the Reparations annuity, it is evident that Mr. Churchill has an ample margin with which to meet both the further cost of his tax remissions of last year and the further assistance that is likely to be granted to the coal mines. Indeed, it is no exaggeration, we think, to say that he is in a position to make ends meet without a single one of the provisions of the Economy Bill.

Why, then, does Mr. Churchill resort to all these wretched shifts, and why is he so manifestly uncomfortable? It is here that we have to reckon with the effect of the standards which he set up for himself last year. He then wantonly staked his reputation on securing a progressive reduction in the national expenditure.

"I believe," he declared, "that we ought to aim at a net reduction in the Supply expenditure of not less than £10 millions a year. That is not taking an extravagant figure. It would be easy for me to get a more favourable response by giving a more illusory figure, but I should be content if we could be sure that the net diminution was not less than £10 millions a year."

Having defined his objective so precisely, and with such an apparent parade of caution, it is clearly not easy for him to turn round now and argue that a progressive increase in the national expenditure, if kept within moderate bounds, does not greatly matter.

Accordingly, though no more is heard of an annual reduction of £10 millions, Mr. Churchill takes his stand on the figure of £800 millions, round which the national expenditure has fluctuated in the last few years, as representing the maximum which ought on no account to be exceeded. This figure was the pivot of the general survey in which he indulged last month in the House of Commons, when he was supposed to be expounding the

Economy Bill. How to keep expenditure down to £800 millions? It cannot be done without raiding the Insurance Funds; therefore the Insurance Funds must be raided. It cannot be done without restricting educational progress; therefore educational progress must be restricted. And even so, as Mr. Churchill was at pains to show, the task is very difficult. The business of the Post Office, for example, is steadily expanding, and this means an increase in both the revenue and the expenditure sides of the national accounts. "Why should I be blamed for that?" asks Mr. Churchill; is it not a good thing and a healthy sign? Undoubtedly it is; but what is the moral? If it is unfair to "blame" Mr. Churchill for this unsatisfactory development, surely it is still more inconsequent to use it as an argument for cutting down the social services. Surely the moral is that the figure of £800 millions is a somewhat arbitrary criterion; yet it is Mr. Churchill himself who has adopted it, and insists on making it the touchstone of his policy.

The Post Office is, of course, a special case; it is a source of sheer confusion that its receipts and expenditure should be included in the Budget figures. But the same consideration which makes it obviously absurd to view with horror an increase in postal expenditure applies to some extent to the Budget as a whole. The tendency for expenditure to expand is in part *due* to causes, such as the growth of the population, which also make for a corresponding expansion of the revenue. This tendency, so far as it goes, is no more disquieting than the growth in postal business; it too supplies no valid reason for blaming Mr. Churchill; but again it supplies no excuse whatever for stinting services which are essential to the progress of the nation.

The borderline between an increase in the national expenditure, on the one hand, and a decrease on the other has, in truth, none of the special significance which current comment attributes to it. A tendency for expenditure to expand more than revenue would mark a turning-point of real importance; for this would indicate increased taxation, and, though we hold, for our part, that it would be better to reimpose part of the burdens that have been removed in recent years than, for example, to slow down educational development, this would certainly be a disagreeable alternative with taxation as high as it still is. But the mere fact that our aggregate expenditure should be on the up-grade marks no such turning-point, and does not constitute an urgent, much less a desperate, situation. Nothing is more needed than a sane perspective on this point; for, after all, it is solely on the ground of extreme financial urgency that Ministers seek to justify the most objectionable features of their policy. They tell us that, if only the money were there, there is nothing nearer to their hearts' desire than educational expenditure. But what is the real position? When the income tax was at 4s. 6d. or 5s. in the £, it was held that we could afford a certain programme of development in the health and education services, and a certain level of State contributions to the Insurance Funds, while the present Government thought the position sufficiently easy to launch a new and costly Pensions scheme. When the income tax has fallen to 4s., we are told that the financial position has changed so greatly for the worse that we can no longer afford these things. And then it appears that the trouble is not even that the income tax may have to be put back to what it was, but that the prospect of further tax remissions—for this is what it comes to—is less rosy than it was.

Do Ministers realize the implications of their present financial policy? They are declaring, in effect, that the continuous reduction of direct taxation is the *essential* thing; and that education and the like must take a second place. Is this what they really mean?

TAXES IN FRANCE

PARIS, APRIL 6TH, 1926.

AFTER months of discussion and three ministerial crises, the Finance Law at last got through Parliament in the early hours of Sunday morning. The first part of it consists of provisions for "putting in order and reforming" existing taxes. The second part provides for the "creation of new resources." It now remains to pass the Budget for the present year, which should have been passed before January 1st, when the financial year began. The Senate will meet again next Monday to consider the Budget of expenditure adopted by the Chamber, which will not meet until April 20th, unless the Senate is ready at an earlier date. Since it is unlikely that there will be any more serious difficulties, the Budget will not be more than four months late. This is an improvement on last year, when the Budget was not passed until the middle of July.

At the risk of being accused of a pessimistic bias, I am obliged to say that the solution of the French financial problem does not seem to me to have been brought any nearer by the law passed on Sunday. And I am convinced that the great majority of the senators and deputies that voted for the law have no more illusion on that point than I have. Never did a Parliament adopt a measure with less conviction. It was passed out of sheer weariness and unwillingness to provoke yet another ministerial crisis. The Chamber let it through, rather than passed it, for nearly a third of the deputies abstained in all the crucial divisions, including the final one on the law as a whole. Although the majority was composed mainly of the "bourgeois" Left and the Centre, and the minority almost entirely of the Communists, some Socialists, and the Right, nearly all the parties were divided, some voting for, some against, and others abstaining. M. Briand has lived up to his reputation for creating political incoherence. Had he by that means secured financial coherence, he could be excused, but he has not. By his persistence in treating the financial question as one to be settled by lobbying and forming ingenious combinations to pass something, no matter what, that the Senate could be induced to accept, he has simply added political to financial chaos.

On paper the Budget is now balanced. The estimated expenditure is 37,237 million francs, and the estimated revenue 37,535 million francs—balance, 298,000,000 francs. In fact, the Budget is not balanced. Leaving aside the question whether the estimate of revenue is not exaggerated, the estimate of expenditure is worthless. It was made months ago, when the franc stood at something between 100 and 110 to the pound. It exceeds by only 4,100 million francs the estimated expenditure for last year, which was in fact considerably exceeded, and is about 20 per cent. lower in gold value. In July, when the Budget for 1925 was passed, the estimated expenditure was equivalent to about £330,000,000 in round figures. At the present rate of exchange the estimated expenditure for this year is equivalent to about £265,000,000. Even if the franc does not further depreciate—an improbable hypothesis—the actual expenditure this year will certainly be 25 per cent. higher than the estimate. If the wars in Morocco and Syria continue, the difference will be even greater. Further inflation seems to me, therefore, inevitable before very long, and with it a further depreciation of the franc. Inflation in the form of National Defence Bonds in fact continues. From the way in which M. Péret is pushing those Bonds on the public, I gather that it is by this means that he hopes to avoid an increase in the note circulation. But can it be avoided?

Apart from the inevitable Budget deficit, the increase in paper prices will surely make it necessary. We come back to the old truism. There will be no solution of the French financial problem until the rulers of France have the courage to face stabilization and its consequences. It is really only a question of courage. They are afraid of the great industrial interests that profit by present conditions, afraid of the economic crisis that would follow stabilization, afraid of the discovery by the rentiers—still living in the illusion of a *révalorisation*—that they have been robbed once and for all of five-sixths of their capital.

The law passed on Sunday contains increases in a large number of indirect taxes. The Chamber characteristically refused to raise the excise duty on wines, although—or rather because, for the fact was used as an argument against the increase!—their prices are about half what they were before the war, but the duty on spirits and liqueurs has been increased, and tobacco prices have been brought nearly up to pre-war prices. There is a new stamp duty on bills in restaurants and cafés, when they exceed 20 francs. It ranges from 25 centimes on amounts between 20 and 25 francs to 10 francs on sums exceeding 300 francs. It is doubtful whether the revenue from this tax will compensate for the trouble and annoyance that it will give, and it will not be easy to enforce it without a costly system of inspection. Certainly nobody able to pay a pound for his lunch will complain of a tax which on that amount will come to about fourpence, but is so trivial an impost worth while? There are already too many taxes in France not worth collecting. One is the salt tax, which for years has yielded less than the cost of collection. It has now been raised from 10 to 20 francs a 100 kilos, but even at that rate it is unlikely to be profitable. This mania for a host of trivial indirect taxes is one of the vices of French fiscal methods.

M. Pétet relies for the increase in revenue principally on the new "civic tax," and on the increase in the rate of the tax on turnovers from 1.3 to 2 per cent. The latter does not apply to retail traders. The "civic tax" was received almost with enthusiasm by the Chamber, which voted it unanimously, but it seems to me a bad one. Persons with incomes not exceeding 7,000 francs a year will pay 40 francs, those whose incomes are between that amount and 10,000 francs will pay 60 francs, and on incomes exceeding 10,000 francs a year the tax will be merely an addition to the income tax. Any addition to the French income tax rates is indefensible, for they are already too high. For example, a tradesman making £100 a year is liable to a tax of about £7 in the first place, and to the general income tax as well. Large incomes, too, are now heavily taxed (on paper). If an unmarried man has an "earned" income exceeding 550,000 francs (about £3,600), 99 per cent. of all that he earns above that sum will (or ought to) be absorbed this year by taxation, apart from what he has to pay on the first 550,000 francs. Unmarried income tax payers are heavily penalized, without regard to the responsibilities that they may have. This is the work of the "natality crisis" faddists, who imagine that they will increase the population by forcing people to marry, whereas what is really needed is a diminution of the heavy death-rate.

If the French income tax rates were really enforced they would be intolerably oppressive; and they are intolerably oppressive on those on whom they can be and are enforced, namely, the wretched people living on salaries, including the sweated Government servants, whose salaries are a scandal. The fact that the rates are

so high makes the trivial yield of the income tax the more ludicrous. If, however, it is desired to make the income tax a reality, the rates must be completely revised. As things are, it is impossible to blame the French for trying to evade the income tax, when most people can evade it so easily. Why should a few honest people go on paying for the rest? It is on the minority who already pay on their real incomes, whether or not because they cannot help it, that the additional burden of the "civic tax" will fall.

The first part of the finance law includes provisions for enforcing the income tax. A declaration is made obligatory for all persons liable to the general tax or already assessed on incomes of 1,500 francs a year or more. The declaration is to be made on oath. I do not believe that this measure will be effective. The people that have been making false declarations for years will not stick at a formal perjury. Besides, the staff of officials responsible for the collection of the direct taxes is quite inadequate and so underpaid that it would not be easy to increase it. All the best men in the French Government service are looking for employment elsewhere, and before long the State will have to fall back on people who can get nothing else to do. Already there is a serious shortage in many departments. In my opinion, the revolt against the income tax in France is to a great extent due to the way in which the tax has been applied, and, still more, to its excessive rates. The same system, or rather lack of system, and the same rates would produce the same results in almost any country.

The Government is probably now safe until after the adjournment of Parliament at the beginning of May for the elections of the *conseils généraux*, but its position has not been strengthened by the vote of Sunday morning. It is understood that M. Briand would like to surrender the Premiership to M. Caillaux, who would also be Minister of Finance, and remain himself Minister of Foreign Affairs, but neither the Radicals nor the Socialists will have M. Caillaux. The return of M. Herriot in the near future seems probable, for he is now willing to form another Cabinet with the support of the Socialists from outside, as before. The Socialists, however, are in a difficult position. The result of the by-election in the second division of Paris has shown how their influence is declining in the capital, where the Communists are now the leading party of the Left. In every one of the seven arrondissements of which the constituency is composed, except the second, they polled more votes at the first ballot than the Radicals and Socialists together. The time seems to be approaching when the Socialists will have to choose between permanent co-operation with the Radicals and some sort of "united front" with the Communists, and that choice might split the party.

I am glad to end with a note of optimism. There is at last a prospect of peace in Morocco. Preliminary negotiations have already taken place between authorized representatives of Abd-el-Krim and representatives of France and Spain, and there does not seem to be any insuperable difference between the two points of view. One of the chief difficulties at present is that Spain wants Tangiers and the neutral zone as compensation for abandoning her protectorate over the Riff. If that matter can be arranged—and, of course, the consent of England would be necessary—there seems to be no reason why the terms of an armistice should not be agreed on and formal peace negotiations begin. One must not exaggerate the possibilities of peace, but there is ground for hope, if only in the fact that all the parties concerned want peace.

ROBERT DELL.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

II.—THE UNITED STATES AND THE LEAGUE

FOR so long America's energies have been absorbed in pushing the frontier Westwards, that it is hard for her people to appreciate that in the twentieth century they have no choice but to take their rightful position in international politics. Many in the East, indeed, some of whom indulge in the shameful boast that they have never been west of the Alleghanies, have always looked to Europe as their spiritual home. But the teeming millions of the Middle West still feel that there are great spaces about them and cling to an isolation which no longer exists.

History and tradition bid them be separate. Their civilization is inherited from Europe, but they have a sense of escape. This sentiment lies deep in the hearts of many New Englanders who have exercised so profound an influence on the rest of the Continent and may be easily traced in their representatives from John Quincy Adams to Senator Lodge. The same shibboleths are constantly repeated by men like Senator Borah, and appeal to multitudes who have in no way realized their implications.

Moreover, many Americans feel that their new amalgam is not yet sufficiently hardened into a nation so as to be able to resist the strains and stresses of too intimate co-operation with other nations. This is, in a sense, true, though the observer feels that any lack of national feeling in some citizens is more than made up by its superabundance in others. At any rate, in every problem affecting a European race, politicians instinctively feel that account must be taken of members of that race who, though Americanized, are conscious of other emotional ties. This applies not only to the Germans, Italians, or Irish, but, though we are apt to forget it, to the English also.

Many Americans would, indeed, be glad if they could live on their own resources, and Mr. Hoover and others are constantly encouraging them to do so as far as possible. But as their superabundance of capital increases, they get more and more involved with the rest of the world. European Bonds, for example, are being bought all over the country, and one got inquiries from the most surprising people in out-of-the-way places as to the political stability of this or that European country in which the questioner had a financial interest.

The cry that was raised that the United States could only re-establish its own prosperity by enabling Europe to do likewise, has, however, been shown to be false. A fierce pean of exultation arose from some of those who were anxious to keep American capital at home when this fact became clear. Here, for example, is a quotation from the financial letter of a not unimportant Western bank. "True there is always on the horizon the dark cloud that represents European economic demoralization, but either its influence upon American affairs has been overrated or the American people, familiar with its presence, have become indifferent to its constant threat. At irregular intervals statesmen, bankers, and publicists arise and solemnly declare that we really must do something about Europe, but as no one seems able to suggest a practical solution, Europe goes on wallowing in the mire of its own creation, while American production, trade, and commerce grow steadily in volume and importance."

"Economic isolation" and "self-sufficiency" are, however, mere catchwords which no one takes too seriously.

The United States must not only continue to be a lender and seller, but more and more she will also be concerned with the raw materials of the rest of the world. In spite of her vast resources, some she lacks altogether, and, if others can be obtained more cheaply in other continents—copper, for instance—her own position as a producer will be instantly affected.

If these economic forces make "isolation" impossible, there are also political movements which are urging her even more strongly towards co-operation with Europe. America's growing power and confidence in herself makes her less afraid of entanglements. Her pride urges her to resume a position of leadership which she is conscious of having thrown away. Her Churches, which wield a great influence, would call this "moral leadership," but even those to whom such phrases make no appeal would like her to play a prominent and masterful rôle. The conscience of most Americans is obviously a little uneasy. They dislike being regarded as "quitters," even when they feel that the facts justify them. The case of the isolationists is even more ignoble than the similar one that is put forward by our "imperialists." America has, of course, an even larger number of "common-sense" journalists than afflict us. But these gentlemen in all countries tend to change their policies as soon as they become unpopular.

Party passions which so influenced the decision have also died down. Large numbers of Republicans are now to recognize the greatness of Woodrow Wilson while reserving their right to criticize his methods on particular points, and particularly as regards his presentation of his case to his own people. It was largely the accidents of politics and the leadership of Wilson that made the Democrats the League party. It is the Republicans who are the naturally enterprising party in Foreign Affairs. Indeed, to-day the most determined opponents of the League appear to me not the Old Guard, but the fervent Radicals, who, like our I.L.P. in earlier years, can see nothing in the League but injustice and force. The Irish and Germans were naturally on their side. But the entry of Ireland into the League and the new attitude of Germany have taken away many of their arguments. When they try to use Russia or Turkey as innocents injured by the League, they find few to listen to them. On the contrary, the absence of Russia from the League is one of the reasons why many Americans would like to enter it.

The real obstacles to America's entry into the League of Nations seem to me to be three in number, and they are formidable enough. In the first place, her constitution, which leaves great decisions on world politics at the mercy of a minority, who may be influenced by reasons which have nothing to do with the real issue. This is the price which America pays for Federalism; and it means that she cannot take part even in so elastic a world organization as the League until there is an enormous majority of citizens who wish her to do so. Nor, perhaps, would it be desirable that she should do so unless the majority is very large. For she might paralyze the whole machine through the intransigence of some irresponsible politicians.

Secondly, there is the preponderance of Europe in the League. It is true that the League's constitution gives very large powers of veto to a single State. Nevertheless, European States would look askance if a majority of the Powers on the Council were American. The United States is naturally afraid that American problems, and in particular her relations with South America, which are as difficult to define legally as some British ones, may be complicated by European interference. She has similar, though less well-founded, fears

about her relations with the East. For this reason the development of regional responsibilities within the framework of the League is, perhaps, one of its most important developments.

Thirdly, there is the fact that as yet the advantages of undertaking obligations hardly seem to bring any compensating protection. Few Americans feel that they are or can be in danger. It needs more imagination than most nations have ever possessed to realize that the next war will be of such a character that American civilization will be threatened as ours is now. Yet, as every year makes the oceans grow smaller, so this complacency will grow less.

The present attitude of most Americans towards the League is, therefore, one of acquiescence in its existence and even of hope for its future. Only a few politicians and newspapers, who have committed themselves too deeply against it to change, work actively against it. The Administration, and especially the President himself, will do everything in their power to co-operate with it. They will also watch it closely, in order to see that American interests are not jeopardized as its power increases. The issue lies, indeed, in the hands of those nations on whom depends the fate of the League. Many Americans are becoming deeply impressed with the growing strength of a body which many of them were taught to believe would be rendered impotent by their own defection. When it is clearly successful they will have no option but to enter it.

Perhaps nothing has done more to delay the recognition of the League's position by the United States than a misapprehension of the position of Britain towards it. We have been considered by large numbers of Americans as likely to follow their example. One of the most prominent of the League's opponents in the United States told me that he was convinced that Britain would withdraw from the League. He based this conclusion on a study of the *ROUND TABLE*—a journal which has greater influence outside Britain than in it.

It is true, of course, that many Americans so distrust England that anything in which she takes part is suspect. They endow our statesmen and diplomatists with an amount of diabolical cleverness and foresight which they rarely possess. But these are only a small minority, and the mass of the American people gives ample credit to the honesty of purpose and adherence to obligations which our leaders can fairly claim. It is thus possible that the deciding factor in the attitude of the United States will be our readiness to make the League of Nations the keystone of our foreign policy. Fortunately, that appears to be a conclusion which all our political parties, though only with a good deal of hesitation and reluctance, have now found it necessary to adopt.

C. K. WEBSTER.

AT ST. STEPHEN'S

'DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT'

(BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, APRIL 5TH, 1926.

"THEY prefer darkness rather than light," it is said in Scripture, "because their deeds are evil." The Government, after doing little or nothing to offend any large class of opinion for nearly eighteen months have at last made a serious blunder. Undoubtedly the blunder was due to ignorance: the ignorance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on all questions affecting the opinion of the working people and the ignorance of the Minister of Health on the conditions and pledges and

promises by which the great Friendly Societies were drawn into the acceptance of National Health Insurance. The first result of this mistake was that the House concluded its labours before the holidays with a sitting which began before four o'clock in the afternoon and ended at nearly ten o'clock next morning. This was not the ordinary all-night "rag" over the Army Annual Bill or an attempt at irrelevant obstruction such as occurs from time to time. It was a real fight and a stubborn fight, in which the leaders of both the Oppositions, for once completely united, spoke and encouraged their followers, either to prevent the robbery of the Friendly and Approved Societies, or to stimulate those Approved Societies outside to resistance. At the proposed withdrawal of the State percentage (which had practically been guaranteed for all time by the original Act) the leaders of the Societies have only given one gasp of astounded anger, but have had no time to collect their forces of resistance. Mr. Chamberlain was endeavouring to thrust through Committee this peccant clause of the Economy Bill, before his supporters—after the Easter Conferences—would be so overwhelmed with pleadings, threats, and condemnations, that a real revolt would arise in the Tory Party. For there are fifteen million insured persons, all plundered by this Act, and a large proportion of them "Tory working men." The Oppositions were fighting for delay: not perhaps however altogether without an eye to the advantage to be gained even if delay were impossible: for they were compelling their political opponents to vote for a measure which will lose them thousands of their supporters, and, indeed, can hardly be passed in its present form.

There were some seventeen divisions. There were six motions to report progress, and the closure was moved nine times. In the intervals of the passage of legislation by the use not of head but of feet, as one member put it, the unfortunate pair—Mr. Chamberlain, lean and unconvincing, Sir Kingsley Wood, his under-Secretary, stoutish and plausible, sat solitary on the Government bench while they were battered and bruised by frontal attacks, and assailed more in sorrow than in anger by Mr. Blundell, Mr. Glyn, Mr. Meller, Mr. Skelton, and Mr. Boothby (representing "Tory Democracy"), for what the latter called "more or less an attack upon the Approved Societies." Once only, just as Mr. Lloyd George had pleasantly termed his friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer "the real artful dodger of the piece," did succour seem to be forthcoming, with the entrance of Mr. Churchill: but on being further denounced for the "infamy in which he had landed his colleagues," the "artful dodger" immediately retired and was seen no more. The debate—if it could be called a debate—was therefore conducted exclusively on the defensive by this pair of unfortunates; handicapped by the fact that Mr. Chamberlain knew nothing of the original pledges and treaties which he at first tried to deride: and by the fact that his subordinate knew everything about them. He had, in fact, negotiated the arrangements by which the Approved Societies were led into abandonment of their independence by promise of a permanent 2s. 9d. grant from the State, to provide additional benefits after the sinking fund for older entrants had been paid off.

Mr. Chamberlain, so excellent in housing debates and sometimes plausible in finance, cut a very poor figure; obviously ill at ease, and towards the end practically ceasing to reply, except to move the closure at intervals deemed by him and the Chairman to be appropriate. The "stock," indeed, of the Chamberlain *frères* is at present low. Sir John Simon tore to pieces the unfortunate Neville's effort at defence in almost as powerful a polemic, delivered at 1.30 a.m., as he had previously torn to pieces the unhappy Austen in his pleadings concerning the collapse of Locarno at Geneva. The Minister of Health, like his brother in boasting how he had raised the prestige of England abroad, had concluded an unconvincing narrative by a similar pitiful little boast that the Friendly Societies, despite this Government theft of nearly three millions a year, would in the future accumulate greater and greater surpluses as time rolled by. Sir Archibald Sinclair, in one of the

best back bench speeches delivered this Session—a really brilliant performance—countered this boasting with deadly quotation from a speech by the same orator delivered a few months ago, in which he announced “disquieting features” which rendered it unlikely that the present surpluses would ever be repeated. “How volatile,” he declared, with a sweeping gesture, “are these gentleman from Birmingham!” The depressed somnambulists who sat behind one of these “volatile” politicians could not even evoke the protest of a groan. Subsequent speakers rang the changes on “insolence,” “ignorance,” “cynical impudence”; and a Labour back bench even unkindly asserted that “Garters are not to be earned in the fashion he has followed.” Meantime, the Chancellor, that “humble and heavenly stranger,” who is in part responsible for the collapse of the sons of the “first gentleman” of that prosperous provincial city—as twenty years ago he was in part responsible for the collapse of their father—like the brigand of Radicofano in Mr. Belloc’s famous story, sits in his doorway and sings.

The honours of the struggle undoubtedly belong to Mr. Thomas. He made thirteen speeches, one over an hour long, besides a litter of pious ejaculations. As head of the railwaymen’s Trade Union Society he knows the subject from A to Z: he kept within the rules of order: and whenever the Minister of Health or the Under-Secretary interrupted him, he slashed them over the head and continued his triumphant career. As thus defending railwaymen’s funds from invasion, he could appear—and rightly—as their champion in Parliament—a useful position in view of the attacks now being made on him by a section of his own Union. Mr. Lloyd George, in the afternoon of the debate, showed himself master of the arts by which he had once obtained office. By relentless cross-examination he drew from Sir Kingsley Wood the astonishing admission that the Statutory Consultative Committee of Friendly Societies’ representatives had only seen the proposals after the Bill was printed: that it rejected them immediately by a majority of nearly four to one: that it was pledged to secrecy on the matter: that despite this vote the Bill was introduced on the same day, while Mr. Neville Chamberlain neither informed the Cabinet nor the House of Commons in his speech defending it, of this decision. Small wonder that Mr. Jack Jones was enabled to demand without protest that a limit should be placed on “the rascality of the people who are going to rob the poor”: or that Mr. Lloyd George could “let himself go” when this statement was dragged out by the confession of the unfortunate Under-Secretary. “The most gross breach of faith ever committed by any Ministry.” “Breaking into the hospital boxes.” “I was charged with robbing hen roosts. At any rate, I went where there were many eggs to spare and they were all in well-feathered and well-defended nests. I did not go prowling round the working-man’s backyard when he was sick in bed to rob him of the few eggs that he had left to him.” The speaker had worked himself into that kind of passionate fury which at times makes him completely dominant, and although there were a few uneasy laughs at his homely similes, I never saw a more dejected body representative of a great party than those who fell under the lash of his invective.

Commander Eyres-Monsell managed his men well. Although his majority fell at one time to sixty-five, he brought up his reserves at the appropriate moment: and his battalions, gagged into silence, slept heavily inside the House or lying in the lobbies between the too frequent divisions which disturbed their peace. So the clause was carried and the House adjourned. But every farthing of these three millions a year is being taken from health and prevention of sickness services of all the working people, men and women. Last year ten millions were given to the wealthy: to-day the poor are deprived of benefit, to make up for this diminution in revenue. The wings of the angel of Tory Democracy, represented by Mr. Baldwin’s pathetic, if perhaps lacrymose and too frequent appeals, if not destroyed have become a little chipped. I do not envy the next Tory candidate who fights a by-election.

LIFE AND POLITICS

A SHREWD political critic prophesied the other day that before this Parliament is ended Mr. Lloyd George will be “the actual though not the titular leader of the Labour Party.” Those who think this, reason, I imagine, roughly as follows. His position in the Liberal Party is embarrassed by his own past. He is now at odds with the old Coalition Liberals. His inclination is to go with the radical group but the radical group shows no eagerness to go with him. His way to the Tory Party is barred: the last election showed him the impossibility of such a move. His innate radicalism, with nothing to suppress it, is driving him more and more to the Left. He probably has no exact plan. He feels rather than thinks. But—such is the line of argument—his feeling is increasingly towards some kind of arrangement or alliance with Labour, and there is nothing in the make of his mind against it—rather the contrary. Would Labour have him? Well, Labour might have to have him. As the writer already quoted says, no one can draw the bow as he can (a dangerous metaphor by the way). No Labour man can put a case like Mr. Lloyd George once he has made up his mind, and is no longer embarrassed by tactics. He cannot and will not make a sudden move into the Labour Party. But he can show them what he is worth as an ally, as he emphatically did in the Economy Bill debate. In writing this I am simply reporting the reasoning of realistic and detached observers.

* * *

As I understand it, the rift between Mr. MacDonald and the I.L.P. is not primarily due to discontent with his leadership. There is a considerable amount of discontent with his leadership—more than is openly expressed—but the ostensible cause of the quarrel is the real one. Mr. MacDonald the idealist is severely controlled by Mr. MacDonald the practical politician, and as a practical politician, obsessed by a possible renewal of power, the “Socialism in our time” slogan is to him “meaningless and possibly disastrous.” His objection to the effort of the I.L.P. to pledge the general party to the living wage as a policy to be introduced by a Labour Government whatever the circumstances is plain enough. It is twofold. An outside body like the I.L.P. should not lay down a programme for a political party faced with actual difficulties. Also, he does not believe in the living wage policy as the instrument for obtaining Socialism. Socialism must come first. As one of his followers put it, “Why go to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head?” The I.L.P., on the other hand, see in this plan of committing any Labour Government, whether with or without a majority, to a bold policy for the redistribution of wealth, the surest way of killing any alliance with the Liberals. On this calculation Mr. MacDonald, if he took office again, would be defeated, not as before on some trumpery issue chosen by his enemies, but on Socialism, and on Socialism alone the subsequent election would be fought.

* * *

At the University settlement where I lived many years ago our Poor Man’s Lawyer was the busiest and perhaps the most useful person. Faced with the law the working man is, and with good reason, a timorous child. He will do anything, swallow any injustice almost, rather than go to the professional lawyers, to him dispensers of ruinously costly mysteries. The Poor Persons’ Department at the High Court was not in existence then. It has done excellent work in bringing legal redress within the reach of the poor. Panels of barristers and solicitors who give their services without fee were formed, and the

system has worked well, except that a class of predacious solicitors found a way of making profits out of costs during the rush of poor persons' divorce suits after the war. This was stopped by a limitation of costs. The Department is now being dissolved and handed over to the Law Society to work under strict regulation and with a small Treasury grant. The system has been hampered by centralization in London, but now the poor person will be able to sue for divorce in many assize towns. The system extends to the law, in a limited way it is true, the panel system which has put cheap medical service within the reach of all. The young barrister, by taking free cases, has an invaluable chance of learning the ropes, just as the medical student learns his ropes in the hospital ward. One hopes that the change from Government Department control to trade union management will work well. The expense and delay of the law, matters for scandal and jest for ages, are a nuisance to the wealthy. They mean complete deprivation of any legal help to the poor, and one would like to see a very generous extension of cheap legal help. No man or woman ought to be barred from legal help in any court, from the police court upwards, for want of money.

* * *

When Mr. Sean O'Casey was presented with the Hawthornden Prize, Lady Gregory promised that London should soon see his new play, "The Plough and the Stars." Dublin raised a disturbance on the first night of its career at the Abbey Theatre, and a glance at the text, which has just been published by Macmillan, makes me surprised that the riot was not a good deal fiercer. The subject is Easter Week, 1916, and the picture of frothy patriotism that turns to looting and swilling when stouter men are dying is drawn in Mr. O'Casey's most vigorous line of satire. The least unpleasant character among the odd lot in a Dublin tenement is a flower-seller who is on the English side. One of the "martyrs" of the rising for the republic is shown as too vain to fight until he has been given officer's rank. Like "Juno and the Paycock," the new piece pours out a "half-and-half" mixture of riotous comedy and starkest tragedy. It appears to me to have the large dramatic virtues in every line of it. It is excellent to hear that Dublin's resentment was brief, and that Mr. O'Casey is now acknowledged for his abilities as a national pride instead of being persecuted for his frankness. After all, he has spoken out louder than Synge and to a generation that has been through the fire.

* * *

I whiled away a few hours of the holiday alternatively dipping into two diverse collections of Letters—Queen Victoria's and Sir Walter Raleigh's. I entertained myself by imagining the criticism one author would have made of the other, and *vice versa*. Queen Victoria would not have got far among the brilliant and explosive opinions of the least Professorial of Professors. "The eunuch was the first modern critic." The book would shut with a bang. "We are *not* amused." Raleigh's views on the literary style of the old Queen would probably be pungent to the extent of being unprintable, even in this volume, which prints without excessive prudery. Raleigh talks about "the Oxford terror of emphasis." No one was ever less of a coward. Tolstoi is "a sensualist gone sour"; Meredith is "vulgar"; "there is nothing falsier than the shop-window work called literature"—and so on. When Queen Victoria meant business she underlined her words. Raleigh was always underlining his ideas.

* * *

Wandering about London on Easter Monday what struck me was the almost painful respectability of the

post-war London crowd. All the classes now dress alike. There is a uniform look of prosperity which may not correspond to facts, but is certainly something unknown before. This uniformity is a kind of democracy, I suppose, but it is depressing. All this was most marked in the colossal picnic that possessed Hampstead Heath. The old-time coster and his donah, gorgeous in pearlyies and feathers, are as dead as poor Albert Chevalier, who may have created them. The solemn ritual dance of the East-End girls no more enlivens the neighbourhood of the public-houses. There is a loss in colour and variety; the London multitude is drab, decorous, even middle-class in its pleasures. Poor folks on holiday are still unregenerate in one thing. The Heath was strewn with a prodigious litter of paper. Another point is the absence of drunkenness. In the course of the day I saw one drunken man, and he was obviously an amateur. The beer has never recovered its stamina since the war. Whatever the cause, the London worker on holiday is as ever incredibly patient and good-humoured, but, as never before—dull.

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"FASCISM AND FORGERY"

SIR,—I have read Mr. Dell's letter in your issue of the 27th, and, as a Hungarian subject, beg the courtesy of your columns to make some observations upon what Mr. Dell has said.

Let me deal with the points he makes *seriatim*. But may I, to begin with, strongly assert that Count Bethlen, since making his momentous speech about three years ago (in the Protestant town of Hódmezővásárhely) upon the manner in which the peace of my country should be restored, has possessed the entire confidence of the Hungarian people, and is supported by the whole nation?

(1) The fact that Count Bethlen has a majority in Parliament surely means that his Government will have a majority in the Commission appointed to deal with the matter at issue; in that Commission every party must in fairness be represented according to its proportion in Parliament. The (Majority) Report can be taken as a fairly accurate expression, then, of the feeling of Parliament.

(2) Mr. Dell remarks that "nobody reading the (Minority) Report will be surprised at its conclusion that the present Hungarian Government is unfit to conduct the prosecution and that 'only a disinterested Government completely unconnected with the affair' can be relied on 'to reveal the truth in all its nakedness.'"

Now, as you in your country, so we in ours, are very proud of the absolute independence of our Judicature from the Executive and Legislative powers. It may, accordingly, be said that the judges constituting the Court that is inquiring into the question of responsibility for the Hungarian forgeries are as impartial as any judges can be.

(3) I read in *LE MATIN* (by which paper Mr. Dell would appear to be greatly influenced) a report of the speech of Count Apponyi in the Hungarian Parliament, on March 18th, and his words about Count Bethlen differed somewhat from the form in which Mr. Dell has repeated them. Count Apponyi, the only really well-considered person amongst the so-called aristocracy of Hungary mentioned by Mr. Dell, said on that occasion that, if the Government recognized its resignation to be in the best interests of our nation, it should resign; but, if not, not. This is rather different from saying that Apponyi advised the immediate resignation of the Government "in the interests of Hungary's foreign relations."

As for Count Andrássy, no one of those who disinterestedly love their country puts much store by what he says; his interests (as seen in his attempt to restore the Hapsburg Dynasty) being hardly those of Hungary.

(4) What can be said of those "other crimes" which "the Hungarian Government has tolerated, if it has not instigated, outrages and assassinations, &c."? When has the present Government committed such crimes? I have heard of no violence of the kind hinted at by Mr. Dell. Before Bethlen came to power, admittedly some Jews were

killed in the fever of the reaction against the Communist régime. This was in the summer and autumn of 1919; but Count Bethlen was not in government until shortly after his speech mentioned above.

Mr. Dell speaks of the suppression of the Press and of the abolition by Bethlen of secret voting. I may say that in no other country have I seen permitted such allegations against its Government as were made by the newspapers of the Opposition in Hungary. So wild and fantastic were these allegations, and so injurious to public confidence, that some sort of control may have been (although I do not know) rendered imperative.

(5) Can Mr. Dell say that the "business men" of whom he speaks were *entirely* unbiased, or represented in the smallest degree any considerable section of the Hungarian people? Myself, I should be inclined to suggest that Mr. Dell has not been wholly unprejudiced in his ardent pursuit of "objective information."

(6) As for Mr. Dell's last remark, which implies his belief in Count Bethlen's homicidal proclivities and financial untrustworthiness, I can do nothing except state my own conviction of the sheer absurdity of any such charge.

True, I cannot hold myself unprejudiced in this matter, because I have met the individual assailed, heard him speak, and know the high opinion which my countrymen have of him.

May I add some considerations of my own?

It may be observed—it must be—that Hungary at present is in a state of convalescence; it is a country that has lost two-thirds of its territory, and is just emerging from the strain of a Bolshevik régime, after (thanks to France) a Roumanian occupation, and then a "White Reaction." Accordingly, in these new circumstances, a strong hand is vital for the rebuilding and stabilization of the country's life. That strong hand has been Count Bethlen's.—Yours, &c.,

(Signed) E. CZMOREK.

New College Settlement, The Pleasance,
Edinburgh.

March 28th, 1926.

TRUSTING CUSTOMERS

SIR,—In your issue of February 13th "Kappa" comments with surprise upon the trust in his customers which a London street news-vendor displayed by allowing purchasers to take their papers and leave the money during his absence. This is a regular practice on numerous street-corners in Chicago. Yet this city is world-famous for its "crime record." Perhaps the explanation is that Americans despise any kind of enterprise which is not operated on a large scale.—Yours, &c.,

H. ADAIR MARQUAND.

FRANCIS BACON

Born January 22nd, 1560/61, died April 9th, 1626.

By DR. CHARLES SINGER.

THE contemplation of the varieties and permutations in the faculties of the human mind has always been a source of edification, nor is less instruction to be derived from the combinations which those varieties and permutations do commonly affect. Now it is, I think, strikingly evident, as we look back over the panorama of history, that very great intellectual ability is manifested but seldom in the isolated or specialized form in which lesser ability is liable to present itself. Great artists, great statesmen, great musicians, great lawyers, great philosophers, great religious leaders, great discoverers, are not only always great men—for that surely is the general condition of their special greatness—but also they are most often men who could have been great in some other department. Leonardo and Michelangelo, Pasteur and Clerk Maxwell, Beethoven and Bach, Goethe and Milton, Pascal and Newton, to take cases at random, all excelled or could have excelled in departments other than those to which their activities were in fact specially devoted.

It may thus be useful to examine the combinations of ability of which history offers examples. Powers of graphic artistic expression are found in combination with ability in experimental science; musical taste and skill is frequently combined with mathematical power; oratory and literary gifts are the natural comrades of statesmanship. Such pairs might be multiplied, but there is one partnership that will not readily be adduced; it is juristic eminence with experimental skill. Capacity, or at least success, in legal studies seems almost inconsistent with those peculiar powers which lead to the advancement of our knowledge concerning the physical universe. The Law and Science seem, in a certain sense, to be mutually exclusive, and it is well to bear this in mind in considering the great variety of talents with which Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, was so richly dowered.

Francis Bacon's juristic eminence is universally conceded, the magic of his pen is abundantly evident, the ingenuity of his philosophy is generally allowed. But, though it will be admitted that Francis Bacon

obtained a view of the vast developments of science in the ages that were to follow, there are many who will deny that his view was clear and undisturbed, while those who have the best right to judge agree that, in applying what he believed to be the method of the new science, he showed little skill and obtained less success. He thus failed in some measure as a scientific philosopher, and to a still greater extent as a practical man of science. Let us therefore turn to consider his attitude towards the investigation of Nature.

What then is this scientific process which Bacon preached so well and practised so ill? The answer can be given in a word. The process of scientific discovery is essentially an *act of judgment*; it is thus in its ultimate analysis a work of art. Facts, phenomena, are infinite in number. We cannot choose them all, as Bacon would have had us do, and then pass them through a mill of logic and elicit a result. Still less dare we choose at random. The process of choosing facts is an act of judgment on the part of the scientist, just as the process of choosing words is an act of judgment on the part of the poet. The choice of the scientist, as of the poet, is doubtless limited by his knowledge of his art. The one, like the other, exercises his judgment to choose things which bear a certain relation to each other. But no knowledge of the nature of reasoning, however profound, nor even knowledge of his science, however complete, will make a man a scientific discoverer, nor will any learning in the lore of metre make a poet.

The scientific man has, in fact, to practise two distinct mental processes; the making of the discovery and the demonstration of its truth. It is doubtless the case that the two are often confused even in his own thinking. Often too his demonstration of the truth of his discovery helps him, perhaps unconsciously, to new acts of judgment. But essentially the two processes are distinct, and the one might be largely developed while the other was in a state of relative arrest. In this matter scientific articles, and especially scientific textbooks, habitually give a false impression. Being composed to demonstrate the truth of certain views, they

must needs obscure the historic process which consists, in effect, of a series of judgments interspersed with imperfect and merely provisional demonstrations, many of which have to be discarded. Thus, such an article or book is in essence an attempt on the part of the investigator to cover his tracks. It is for this reason that science can never be learned from books, but only by contact with phenomena.

This distinction between the *act* and the *demonstration* of discovery was consistently missed during the Middle Ages. Mediæval thought is further distinguished from our own by the persistent conviction in those ages that a wide measure of truth could be elicited from a very small series of observations by the extensive use of ratiocination. The latter error Bacon clearly discerned, and his discernment entitles him to rank as the herald of modern science. His claim that a direct appeal to Nature was the only way to truth at once raised the functions of the observer, while it tended to depress the vast mediæval claims for ratiocination. Philosophy, in Bacon's view, became altogether practical, and in his view truth and utility became in their ultimate aspect the same.

On the other point in which our thought is separated from that of the Middle Ages Bacon remained in darkness. He succeeded, indeed, in emphasizing the importance of the operation of collection of facts, but he failed to perceive how deeply the act of judgment must be involved in the effective collection of facts.

As an insurance against error in collection, Bacon had warned men against his four famous *Idola*, or false notions of things, erroneous ways of looking at Nature. There were the *Idola Tribus*, the idols of the tribe, fallacies inherent in humankind in general, and notably man's proneness to suppose in nature greater order than is actually there. There were the *Idola Specus*, idols of the cave, errors inherent in our individual constitution, our private and particular prejudices, as we may term them. There were the *Idola Fori*, errors of the marketplace, errors arising from the influence of mere words over our minds. There were the *Idola Theatri*, the idols of the theatre, errors arising from received systems of thought. But did not Bacon himself fail to discern a fifth set of idols, that we may term the *Idola Acedemiæ*, the idols of the schools, the fallacy of supposing that a blind though learned rule can take the place of judgment? It was this fifth idol that prevented Bacon from entering into the promised land, of which but a Pisgah view was granted to him.

We may now turn to consider whether, in fact, the knowledge of his time would have enabled him to come to any other conclusions than those which he reached. What, we may inquire, were the actual concrete scientific achievements of his day, on which he might have tested his method? We may, perhaps, exonerate Bacon for having effectively ignored the astronomical ideas of his day. Copernicus (1473-1543), though he initiated a great movement, made no important observational contribution in his work, the first edition of which appeared in 1543. It was not till 1630, when Bacon had been in his grave for four years, that Galileo (1564-1642), gave the Copernican theory its formal observational justification, though Bacon had had news of Galileo's activities as early as 1616 from his friend, Sir Tobie Matthew (1577-1655), then travelling in Italy. Bacon missed, however, the "New Astronomy" (1609) of Kepler (1571-1630), which laid the foundation of modern astronomical views, set forth for the first time the laws of planetary motions, and developed a tenable theory of the tides, a subject in which Bacon was specially interested. Biology was less advanced than astronomical

science, but there was one biological work of first-class importance from which Bacon might have learned of the distinction between the act of discovery and the demonstration of discovery. It had been written at Padua in 1543 by the Belgian, Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564), and bore the title "On the Fabric of the Human Body." It placed the study of anatomy at once on a scientific basis and contained an enormous number of first-hand observations.

But, beside these, there were two men at home who were admirable exponents of the experimental method, and whom Bacon might have watched at work. One was William Gilbert (1544-1603), physician to Bacon's two royal masters, Elizabeth and James I., and founder of the science of electricity. Gilbert's great book "On the Magnet," was published in 1600. His main thesis is that the earth itself is a magnet, and he explains, classifies and records a great number of magnetic phenomena. Now Gilbert so clearly perceived the character of the scientific process that he adopts in his book a special typographical method of marking and distinguishing his actual observations from his inferences or from matters he records on the evidence of others. Had Bacon followed these observations, he might have watched the practice of the art of discovery at the hand of a master. At Gilbert's house in London there used to flogather a society of men interested in the secrets of nature. This may be regarded as the earliest Scientific Association in England, and perhaps the earliest in Europe. The inspiration of Bacon's philosophy and the magic of his pen produced in the generation which followed him the "Secret College" which grew into the "Royal Society." It was an irony of fate that Bacon was no member of the Secret College that was meeting at his very door.

The reason why Bacon ignored the secret college of his own time is perhaps given to us by the only other contemporary Englishman who was a first-class exponent of the experimental method. William Harvey (1578-1657), a student of Bacon's own University of Cambridge, returned to England in 1603 after a long period of study at Padua. In 1618 he became physician to James I. Harvey was a most industrious experimenter, and he was lecturing in London on the circulation of the blood as early as 1616, though he did not publish his discovery until 1628. Among his patients was Lord Chancellor Bacon. Yet Bacon not only knew nothing of Harvey's work, but failed to make any impression on the fine practical mind of the great physiologist. Harvey would not allow him to be a great philosopher, though he esteemed him much for his wit and style. Speaking of him, Harvey told Aubrey "he writes philosophy [*i.e.*, science] like a Lord Chancellor." This shrewd saying may well contain the root of the matter. It may be that it was just Bacon's legal powers and legal training that shut him out from a real appreciation of the scientific process. Fixing his gaze on the distant prospect of scientific achievement, he failed to focus exactly the details of scientific method.

We must glance at the influence of Bacon in posterity. It is significant that he has made himself more felt in the domain of the moral and metaphysical sciences than in the physical. Furthermore, we observe that while many who have written about science have done him homage—and notable among them, Voltaire and d'Alembert and the other contributors to the "Encyclopédie," by whom he is regarded as "le plus grand, le plus universel, et le plus éloquent des philosophes"—while men of science, such as Leibnitz, Huygens, and above all Robert Boyle, have had him in good regard, yet there is not the least evidence that these or any other eminent scientific men have ever followed

his method. Yet despite Bacon's failure on the field of the practical application of his method, the world certainly owes to him some developments of high importance. These we may sum up as threefold:—

(a) He did in fact set forth clearly the widening intellectual breach which separated the men of his day from the Middle Ages. He perceived the vices of the scholastic method, and in the clearness of his vision and expression he stands above his contemporaries, men such as Campanella (1548-1639) and Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), who, like him, were striving towards a new form of intellectual activity.

(b) English writers of the later seventeenth century concur in ascribing to the impetus of Bacon's writings the foundation of the Royal Society. Thomas Sprat (1635-1713), Bishop of Rochester, the first historian of the society, assures us of this, as does Oldenburg (1615-1677), the most energetic of its early secretaries. The opinion is confirmed by Boyle (1627-1691), and by many other of the early members.

(c) It is perhaps in the department of psychological speculation that the influence of Bacon has been most marked. The basic principle of Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (1690), that all our ideas are the product of sensation and of reflection, is implicit in the first Aphorism of Bacon's "Novum Organum," "Homo naturæ minister et interpres, tantum facit et intelligit, quantum de naturæ ordine, re vel mente observaverit; nec amplius scit, aut potest." The whole atmosphere of Locke's work is taken from, or at least is characteristic of, the "Novum Organum." Through the "practical" tendency of his philosophy and through Locke, Bacon was the father alike of English psychological speculation and of the empirical method in the department of ethics.

Whatever his positive achievements may have been, we may thus accord to him his own claim that "he rang the bell which called the wits together."

FOR SIGNS AND FOR SEASONS

By KATHARINE LEAF.

IT is a wholesome exercise now and again to commune with the almanac; for it reminds us that however drably uniform we may make our days, the seasons still follow inevitably upon each other, and the variations of the weather are beyond our destructive reach. Nor should we arrogantly claim to be "above" the influence of mere physical phenomena; for, God be thanked, we are still more their toys than we choose to admit. In spite of our science and our subjectivity, the weather and the seasons still influence our moods and mould our happiness, and will do so until we have become insensible machines.

Hence I believe that weather-talk is no mere gap-filling convention, but an inevitable outlet for pent-up emotion; and that people who talk of floods or heat-waves as a mere *pis aller* are guilty of insincerity, and betray one of the deeply rooted instincts of mankind. I, for my part, although otherwise a flippant and irresponsible conversationalist, am a deadly serious weather-talker. Speak to me of books, pictures, music, or politics, and I will say whatever seems least trouble, or whatever chances to come into my head. To one man I am a Liberal, and to another Labour; and in the course of a single Bloomsbury party I can pronounce half-a-dozen contradictory judgments on one expressionist play. But I never say to one man "It is hot this week," and to the next, "It is cold." Because weather is one of the few things that really matter, and though civilization has blunted many of my instinctive reactions, it has made my weather-sense only the more delicately sensitive. Therefore my pronouncements on questions of rain and sunshine, and the progress of the seasons, are sincere, because these are matters that I know and understand.

It is a mistake, moreover, to suppose that Londoners are cut off from contact with weather and from seasonal changes. Any country bumpkin, when he sees daffodils rippling under a glitter of apple-blossom, can grasp that it is spring; or when he sees the downs swept by golden corn, can say "Autumn is upon us." But could the dull fool, set down outside the Royal Exchange, tell you the season or the month thereof? Could he even emerge with any credit from the lenient test of the Parks? And yet your Londoner feels the beginning of spring in a dozen tender hints. He notes the pink haze of *daphne mezereum* in Regent's Park, the blooming of anemones on street barrows, and of narcissus in tea-shops; he observes that the Piccadilly flower-girls are wearing black straw hats, and the young men their suede shoes. And when, one day, he emerges from a *matinée* into daylight made magical by faint street lights, his inner knowledge is confirmed by fact. Lighting-up time is nearing the dinner-hour, and spring is here indeed.

And so the Londoner knows that it is autumn when he looks up from his book at tea-time, and marks how his windows shut out the swimming green twilight as glass holds the water of an aquarium; and how the baring plane branches sway in that crepuscle like water-weeds. He tries to trap the magic; but already his reading-lamp is reflected in the glass, and now comes a parlour-maid to draw the curtains with a warm, rattling sound. The green world is shut away, and to-night at any rate he will see no shoals of mysterious fish wheeling in and out of rocky chimney-stacks.

Perhaps we are hyper-sensitive to these changes in London because we ourselves are less a part of them than in the country, and because we cannot express our feelings in outward activity. To countrymen, the spring is for sowing, and the autumn for reaping; in the winter they live hard, and then introspection threatens their lonely frozen souls; in the summer, I believe, they make hay. But in London we live much the same in every season, and do not outwardly react to them. We do not feel impelled to dance together publicly on May-day, because it is not done, and because saxophones are in song all the year round. But each of us hears the thrush, and we hear the tabor's note in our heart's core; and as we trip demurely along the Broadwalk, our toes twitch secretly inside our new shoes or our outseasoned Russian boots. In June, mediævally the month of courts and courting, we seek the elegance of St. James's Park, where pelicans and sleek civil servants bask and preen themselves in the sunlight. But town-dwellers have no communal expression for the significance of the season; they cannot work it off, like rustics; and having devised no equinoctial orgies, no sacrifice to the first crocus, or mid-summer bacchanal, we must continue to mark these changes only to ourselves.

Yet the joy and misery which every man feels in sunshine and rain must find an escape in words; and so he seeks relief in blessed commonplaces. While his heart is crying—"How can I bear my life under this pall of fog, this saturation of poisonous moisture that rots away my soul, this yellow murk that has jaundiced my eyes until I hate my friends and despise myself?"—his lips smile grimly and say, "Awful weather we're having, aren't we?" And when in August the tar sticks hotly to his shoes, and the sun beats down on his head; when the 'buses are breathing fire on him, and the pavements consume his bones, he must not groan nor scream, but can only burble "Warmish to-day, what!"—or such inadequate words.

And now, when spring has woken you, and you can no longer hide away from life, but must be born again; and when you find that the life you had shirked is not, after all, unbearable—even now you must not shout aloud, but must get what satisfaction you can from the formula—"Isn't this a real spring day, my dear!" For the more our bodies move in the constant companionship of strangers, the more we are cut off and lonely within; and our communications must be by facile, short-cut phrases. We shall continue to use these weather formulas to relieve our feelings, just as long as we are able to feel the subtle natural changes through which we pass; and that, I hope, will be as long as we live and move and have our being.

FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA

ANDREYEV'S "Katerina" (at the Barnes Theatre) seems a little weak and wobbly, and even in parts boring, after Chekhov's "Three Sisters." Judged by the standard of the ordinary English play, it seems full of subtlety and interest, and about people with blood in their veins and not sawdust. The blood is Russian blood, not English, of course; it is a more mystical fluid, of a less positive red. The play begins violently, but inconclusively, with a husband shooting at his wife, and missing her. It ends violently, but inconclusively, with a husband refusing a cigarette from his wife's seducer. Between these two crises there is an infinity of talk. Sometimes Katerina gets so far as to jump upon a sofa and look out of a window six storeys above the street. But she does not throw herself out. She sinks among the cushions and discusses her own villainess. Nobody does anything; but Andreyev is quite interesting enough to make talk itself dramatic. At times, it is true, we seem to have heard the remark before. Nothing can happen, we feel, but another cigarette and another cup of tea. And yet that end, when it comes, seems in its queer way a legitimate full stop. The acting, which was admirable, and the producing, which was also admirable, played splendidly into each other's hands, and contributed substantially to a feeling of inconclusive, elusive, almost mystical satisfaction, when the curtain fell.

The performance of "Kitesh" at Covent Garden on March 30th was a significant event, creating various precedents. It was, for instance, the first performance in England of Rimsky-Korsakov's last opera but one, and our first opportunity since 1914 of hearing Russian parts sung by Russian voices; it was also the first concert-performance of an opera on the Covent Garden stage, and a red-letter night for the B.B.C. The opera is based on a sacred legend, and is marked by Rimsky-Korsakov's easy mastery of folk-tunes, and his skill in fusing them into a richly orchestrated whole. The street scenes and Tartar hordes are very exciting, and create an atmosphere which even the suspended microphone, the solid, white-clothed chorus, and a Gothic-cum-Moorish background could not defeat. The soloists Alexander Mosjoukin and George Pozemkovsky were especially good, and if Helene Smirnova's singing did not impress us, that was perhaps the composer's fault for swamping the only woman's part. The chorus, drawn partly from the Chapel Royal choir, sang well in what passed for Russian to the uninitiated; and the B.B.C. orchestra played with a finished excellence which the Opera House orchestra itself need not despise. The performers must all have worked hard for their director and conductor, Mr. Albert Coates, and have shared his enthusiasm for this lovely opera, as we did.

The "Cape to Cairo" film at the Polytechnic is very well worth a visit for several reasons. Not only is it a record of a pioneer journey, as the title tells us, but there are incidental things of the greatest interest. For the archaeologist, there are the ruins of Zimbabwe; for the ethnologist, excellent pictures of native dances, ceremonies, and costumes; and, above all, for the naturalist, some admirable pictures of game, for taking which Mr. Glover, the photographer, deserves the highest praise. For the lover of adventure, it is most exciting to watch the motors crossing rivers by ford, or on rafts and rickety bridges, or even completely under water in crocodile-infested areas. It is true that the general public seems most to appreciate the pretty-pretty pictures of falls, or the shots of Mrs. Court Treatt washing the monkeys, but these are taken in their stride. It was certainly an amazing adventure, sixteen months' strenuous travelling over 13,000 odd miles, contending with swamps, forests, desert, and fever. Major Court Treatt delivers a running commentary as the film proceeds: he does it very well indeed, with not a word too much: in fact, one is sometimes inclined to regret his reticence, but it is a fault on the right side. I understand much of the film had to be cut for length, as well as for other reasons, but even so it makes an excellent afternoon or evening. One hopes for a book on the subject.

Mr. Masefield's "Good Friday" at the Century was a rather striking performance, excellently and imaginatively produced by Miss Beatrice Wilson, who made amazing use of the small resources of the theatre. The piece itself would have no meaning unless we knew who the mysterious person was who is so much spoken of and never appears. To a cultivated people who had never heard of Christianity it would be the fifth act of an otherwise missing play. But there is nothing illegitimate in this. Mr. Philip Reeves was a very good, convincing Pilate; though speaking rhymed verse, he never forgot he was a man and not a mouthpiece, but the rest of the cast were not quite so judicious, except, perhaps, Miss Esmé Church in the part of Procula. The clash of politics is well brought out, and so, at the end, is the final irony of Pilate's reconciliation with Herod. Mr. Masefield is not always very happy in his verse: he seems to regard a play as a peg to hang poetry on rather than to realize poetry as an integral part of a play.

* * *

Things to see or hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, April 10.—"Hell-Bent fer Heaven," at Everyman.

"Riverside Nights," by A. P. Herbert and Nigel Playfair, at Lyric, Hammersmith.

Harold Craxton, piano recital, at 3, at Victoria and Albert Museum.

Sunday, April 11.—Webster's "The White Devil," Phoenix Society, at the Court.

"Experiment," Playmates, at St. George's Hall.

"Israel," Jewish Drama League, at the Strand.

Film Society, at New Gallery Kinema.

Tuesday, April 13.—Pirandello's "Hamlet," at London Pavilion.

Intime Trio, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Wednesday, April 14.—"Lady be Good," at the Empire. Ida Starkie and Henry Bronkhurst, 'cello and piano recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Thursday, April 15.—"This Woman Business," at the Haymarket.

Victor Watson, double bass recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Mr. Alfred Noyes, reading of his poems, at 5, at 92, Victoria Street.

Friday, April 16.—"Riki Tiki," at the Gaiety.

Orloff, piano recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Robert Pollak, violin recital, at 8.15, at Æolian Hall.

Lieutenant-General Sir W. T. Furse on "The Work of the Imperial Institute," at 4.30, at Royal Society of Arts.

OMICRON.

THEATRES.

ALDWYCH. Gerr. 3929. EVENINGS, at 8.15.
MATINEES, WED. & FRI., at 2.30.
A CUCKOO IN THE NEST.
TOM WALLS, YVONNE ARNAUD & RALPH LYNN.

COURT. Sloane Square. Sloane 5137 (2 lines).
NIGHTLY, at 8.15. MATS, WED., THURS., SAT., at 2.15.
THE FARMER'S WIFE
3RD YEAR AND LONDON'S LONGEST RUN.

CRITERION. EVENINGS, 8.30. MATS, TUES., SAT., 2.30.
MARIE TEMPEST in
THE CATS-CRADLE.

DRURY LANE. EVENINGS, 8.15. MATS, WED. & SAT., 2.30.
ROSE MARIE. A Musical Play.
NELSON KEYS. EDITH DAY. DEREK OLDHAM.

FORTUNE. Ger. 3855. EVGS., 8.30. MATS, WED., SAT., 2.30.
JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK.
By SEAN O'CASEY.

HIPPODROME, London. Ger. 650.
EVENINGS, at 8.15. MATS, WED., THURS. & SAT., at 2.30.
MERCENARY MARY.
ALL SEATS BOOKABLE. BOX OFFICE 10 to 10

CINEMAS.

TIVOLI. DAILY, 2.30, 5.30 & 8.30. SUN., 6 & 8.30. Gerr. 5222.
Last Week of DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS in
THE BLACK PIRATE
Seats reserved, 2/4, 3/6, 5/9. Unreserved, 1/3.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

LIVING VICARIOUSLY

IT seems to be a common characteristic of human beings to find something morally wrong in other people enjoying themselves. For generations the educational system was rooted in the theory that what is unpleasant must be good, and what is pleasant must be bad. The same theory is at the root of Puritanism and a good many other religious or Christian doctrines. There is, perhaps, nothing very surprising in that, but it is strange to find this sense of original sin cropping up, not in the congenial soil of ethics and religion, but in such a very different field as literary criticism. But it does. I have often noticed that there is a tendency among many people to assume that any kind of book which is much enjoyed by a large number of people must have something peculiarly bad in it. I do not mean here bad according to the canons of literary criticism, but bad morally. It is certainly true that the books which give the greatest amount of enjoyment to the greatest number of people are not the greatest works of art. But that is not the question. The kind of condemnation which I am thinking of is that which shakes its head over the enjoyment of boys in blood-and-thunder stories and of adults in "rotten novels."

A new variety of this literary Puritanism has recently made its appearance. I have several times seen during this publishing season disparaging remarks in the Press with regard to the modern craze for biographies. The publishers' lists show that there is an ever-increasing demand for this class of book, and it is only fair to assume that an immense number of people obtain great enjoyment by living vicariously in the 15s. and 18s. volumes which contain the biographies or reminiscences of many famous or obscure persons. This fact is quite sufficient to start the Puritan pack in full cry. These biographies, we are told, are bad books which cater for some of the lowest passions of the human mind, gossip and snobbery and worse, while from a literary point of view they are worthless rubbish. There may be a certain amount of prejudice on my part, because I share the common taste, but the only adequate answer to this seems to me to be "nonsense." I can also give reasons in support of the answer.

I have just read five biographical or autobiographical works published during the last few weeks. Two of them are very good books; one is mediocre; two are poor specimens. Of this I am quite sure, that the five are on a higher level, whether moral or even literary, than any five recently published books which you could select more or less at random from any other department of literature. All pleasure must be bad, if the pleasure which one gets from them is bad. Let us look at the good ones first. They are "Diary of a Country Parson," by James Woodforde, edited by John Beresford, Vol. II., 1782-1787 (Milford, 12s. 6d.), and "Seventy Years a Showman," by "Lord" George Sanger, with an introduction by Kenneth Grahame (Dent, 6s.). A great deal of the pleasure to be derived from these books consists in the fact that they enable one to live vicariously lives so different from our own. I wrote about Woodforde's Diary when Mr. Beresford published the first volume last year. The second volume is as good as the first. There is no literary value in this book; it is not exciting; nothing of the slightest importance ever happened to that pleasant, but most commonplace eighteenth-century parson; there is here nothing to pander to any

craving for snobbery, excitement, or gossip. But it is a charming and romantic book. Through the incredibly trivial entries of this diary, one is enabled almost physically to potter through the life of the parson in a country village one hundred and fifty years ago. Among the hooting of motor-horns, the ringing of telephone bells, which strike the note of modern civilization, I find considerable pleasure in such vicarious living, and, if I had to defend the book on more intellectual grounds, I should add that there is more history to be learnt from James Woodforde than from many a corpulent and pompous academic volume.

"Lord" George Sanger's autobiography is a very different book. Years ago I came across it in paper covers, and I still cherish its tattered leaves. The great circus proprietor's life is told quite simply, even baldly, but it acquires a solidity and vividness, a sense of movement and incident, which are remarkable. This is a far better book than ninety-nine out of a hundred novels; its stories are stranger and more romantic than fiction, and in addition bear on their face the mysterious *cachet* of truth and reality. And here, I think, one comes upon the real defence of the autobiography, if not the biography. If Sanger had written a novel or a book of moral reflection or essays or history, it would have been inconceivably bad and unreadable. But the idea of telling the story of his life, of reliving the years of his childhood and youth, inspired him to write a book, not only of great "human interest," but even of literary merit. He may not have written it himself, of course, but then the case is even stronger, for he was able to carry the inspiration over to his amanuensis. At any rate, the book is extraordinarily alive; it has something of the keen, fresh, Borrowian atmosphere of the road in it. The characters of the author and of his father stand out with astonishing clearness—and what fascinating characters, how solidly English, they are! And they move through a world which is already dead, a world which is now historical but never finds its way into histories. It was the world of the "common people" in the early and middle nineteenth century. Chartists, bodysnatchers, witches, bloodthirsty mobs, the widow Miller, Lord Beaconsfield, even Queen Victoria come alive again in these pages, and for an hour or two we have the privilege of living vicariously with them.

And now for a glimpse at the other three books. "Recollected in Tranquillity," by Janet E. Courtney (Heinemann, 12s. 6d.), is mediocre, being part good and part bad. Mrs. W. L. Courtney has had a varied and interesting life which began in a country parsonage, and has taken her into Government offices, the Bank of England, the Times Book Club, and Mr. Hooper's "Encyclopædia Britannica." Her book begins rather heavily, but suddenly brightens up and becomes interesting when we get to the book war and Mr. Hooper. "Naphtali," by C. Lewis Hind (Bodley Head, 15s.), has a very good joke in the title, and anecdotes of Henley, Beardsley, and other well-known people, but it is sentimental and rather "sloppy." "Hubert Parry," by Charles L. Graves (Macmillan, two vols., 30s.), is a heavy-weight in which the best things are Parry's letters and the extracts from his diary. None of these three books is good, but how much more interesting they are than books on the same level which are not biographical.

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

WILLIAM GODWIN

The Life of William Godwin. By FORD K. BROWN.
(Dent, 16s.)

MR. BROWN has wisely avoided any attempt to make a hero of Godwin: the most lenient view would not allow that. He has merely taken all the existing material he could lay hands upon, examined it carefully, sorted it out, and built up from the most reliable of it a readable and impartial account of the life of one of the most foolishly-wise men who ever existed. The result is a book for which the student, and the general reader too, may well be grateful. If, when we come at last to Godwin's death, the impression we have is still of a great man, that is because, for all his shambling incompetence, he yet contrived to leave the world the richer for the one great belief he so earnestly held.

Even as a child he showed signs of genius, so that his mother called him the "little Solomon." The pity was that that genius never seemed able to override the Nonconformist prejudices to which he was heir. At eight he was preaching sermons on sin and damnation in his mother's kitchen; and at school it grieved him sorely to see in his companions so little manifestation of God's grace. To that Nonconformist trait must be added, perhaps because of a particularly chaotic education, an obstinately unpractical nature. He made one, and only one, attempt to set up as a school-master, and accordingly issued a sort of prospectus; "but it consisted almost entirely of educational theories largely derived from Rousseau, curiously interspersed with apothegms largely derived from d'Holbach." That is typical of him. Then began the literary work which, for fifty years, occupied his attention. The speed with which he poured out those first novels of his ("I wrote in ten days a novel called 'Damon and Delia'") is in curious contrast with his later habits. Then came the "Political Justice." It immediately made him, as Coleridge later said, "one of the captains and chief men in the world's admiration." And, erroneous as much of it seems to us now, it remains his greatest contribution to the progress of man. He thought that the world had only to behave *reasonably*, man to man, and all would be well. We have since learned that reason is not necessarily the sole guide to right conduct. But Godwin was a noble pioneer in that way of thinking. Not until he came under the influence of Mary Wollstonecraft did he waver from that dictum. "The strength of her mind," he then dared to confess, "lay in intuition." It was a considerable step. As Coleridge later wrote, "Godwin is no great things in intellect; but in heart and manner he is all the better for having been the husband of Mary Wollstonecraft. . . ." But, to the end of his days, he remained essentially a stranger to the ways of human nature: much as he knew of man, he knew little of men. How unknowing he was in this matter is clearly shown in Mr. Brown's accounts of the callous way in which, time after time, he used his friends, like any vulgar sponger, to mend his hopeless finances. The theorist never learned to square his theories with the practice of life. When even Shelley, who surely was the most unwilling of all Godwin's admirers to be disillusioned about his hero, was compelled to face the fact of his blind indifference, Mary Shelley wrote in her journal, simply but expressively: "Oh, Philosophy!" That cry still reaches the depths of Godwin's weakness. His genius was great enough to enable him to set men's minds thinking along the lines that have since led to modern English Socialism; it was also mean enough to allow him to vilify the character of his best friend and admirer, if thereby he might mitigate the embarrassments his wilful incompetence had led him into. Perhaps Hazlitt's is still the epithet most applicable to him: "His name is an abstraction in letters."

Mr. Brown adds little of importance that is new. That was hardly his aim. Most of the matter has long been available in C. Kegan Paul's two valuable volumes. What this book does is to build up at last a composite portrait; and as such it is so thorough and competent and alive that until, if ever, new material comes to light, it can scarcely be superseded.

MAURICE HEWLETT

The Letters of Maurice Hewlett. Edited by LAURENCE BINYON. With an Introductory Memoir by EDWARD HEWLETT. (Methuen, 18s.)

IT was always an event to open a new book by Maurice Hewlett. Two questions attended it: What is he trying now? and Has he really pulled it off this time? It nearly always proved that he was trying something different, and if one waited until the intoxication of his heady brew had cooled a little, one usually had to admit that he had not quite pulled it off. Yet here was something more than a man at his trade of novel-writing. His easy and confident brilliance was never the brilliance of emptiness. One felt a restless force beneath the artifice which must be driving the man to write. What was he really trying to say? Would he ever find out? The question was artistically important and humanly exciting. This volume of Hewlett's letters throws much light on it. It is surely the gayest and most game of all the books connected with his name. For he habitually wrote that good letter which comes without premeditation, hot from the head, twinkling with jokes, and speaks for itself with the very accent of conversation:—

"Did your eagle eye remark the advertisement in yesterday's *Times*: 'Can any gentleman tell me how to make a man's chin bald? Not too painful—have tried barium sulphide.' What man's chin? There's black work there, depend upon it."

There is much here of the truculent air, the twirling moustache, and defiant pose of the head which was Mr. Binyon's first, and possibly the world's chief, impression of him. But this was only a façade. Face to face with his work he is alternately elated and depressed, but humility and incertitude are never far below the surface. Mr. Binyon says truly that the really interesting thing about Hewlett's literary career is that he never settled down. Most men of letters get their line long before mid-career. Not so Hewlett. The moustache twirled, the brain bubbled with ideas, the novels got written and rewritten, plays were thrown off, history and poems projected, but the teasing certainty: "This isn't quite what I want," was never stifled. "The Forest Lovers," a happy shot at a venture, hit the mark of success, and its repetition would have made and kept him a rich man. He never repeated it: there is a fresh idea in each succeeding novel. At this period he was like a man enchanted with the hot romantic colour of life. Again and again in these letters he says that he is a poet who can only write prose. There is a curious passage in an early letter:—

"... never forget Balzac. I have been thinking about him a good deal lately, for in times of depression I have felt that I never shall be a poet, and as I mean to be one, why Balzac does me good. It is pluck we want... the pluck that can hold on, wait and wait and wait. Set your teeth and sit tight."

Possibly his novels are the "sitting tight." At any rate, he got his vision. The colours of Greece and Italy faded. A simple, sombre picture composed itself. It was dark but clear—the picture of the English peasant working the soil. The note changes:—

"I've never thought so before, but I do think I've done it this time."

What he had done was a chronicle of Hodge: "The Song of the Plow." Before the war was ended he had made Hodge's wife speak in "The Village Wife's Lament," as naked and noble a poem as this century has seen. After that:—

"I don't write novels now, though I should if I could. But I seem to have lost the knack."

He moved into a cottage and settled down to help Hodge on the Wiltshire County Council, writing reviews ("balaams" he called them) and occasional essays to keep the wolf from his own door. Thus he died.

Letters being the staple of biography, and biography being the roaring trade it now is, it almost behoves those who are notable or notorious never to write a letter without the conclusion: "When you have read this, burn it." We may be thankful that Hewlett's friends kept his letters and that Mr. Binyon has edited them.

ECONOMIC ENDS AND MEANS

The Economic Problem. By R. G. HAWTREY. (Longmans. 10s. 6d.)

THE appearance of a new book by Mr. Hawtrey is an event in the economists' world. Combining a considerable amount of experience and worldly wisdom with an acute analytical vision, the author can be relied upon to throw refreshing and suggestive new light over the problem he handles. And like his earlier book, "Currency and Credit," this present one has its main interest in the original method of approach—an approach, not from "first principles," but from an examination of actual institutions.

For Mr. Hawtrey it is the problem of organization—organizing joint action to produce a given result—that is essentially the economic problem. But the criticism of the "end" by which this joint action is governed is the province of social philosophy; and as joint action must imply an "end," so economics must imply and rest upon a social philosophy. In primitive society this organization of joint action was enforced by various "taboos," designed in the interest of "ends" which had become traditional. In present day society taboos still exist, often severed from their original rational basis; and hence the rôle of the economist is to "rationalize these taboos and customs, and relate the means to the end."

Mr. Hawtrey starts with the individualist solution of this problem, analyzes it, and criticizes it; and in the course of this analysis, involving an examination of the economic market, we are given some very suggestive ideas about profit, upon the interpretation of which much of the subsequent reasoning hinges. Profit is regarded as the reward of commercial enterprise or *dealing*, and as the result of a scarcity of those who in the ordinary way are fitted and equipped for this type of operation. It is the cause, and in turn the result, of business "goodwill." Capitalist producers and dealers, the argument runs, have to be people "who possess or can acquire material resources in considerable quantity"; and because their number is limited, profit is at the outset shut off from the forces which operate in the labour market and tend to adjust earnings to effort. In addition, there is the existence of "tacit understandings among dealers to respect one another's profits"; there is the preponderance of conventional ideas as to the "normal rate of profit," to which business actions are made to conform; there is the need for a newcomer to possess some special knowledge of the market and a business connection. The somewhat unorthodox conclusion is reached that price-cutting is an exceptional, rather than a general, method of market competition—more general are advertisement and the giving of long credit, &c., which require capital—and that in so far as the equalizing tendency of the market applies to profit, it is in the direction of adjusting profit "according to turnover, not according to skill or industry." Hence, the basis of inequality of incomes lies in the "inequality between those established in business and the main body of those whose remuneration is determined by the labour market." Inequality is, accordingly, a necessary accompaniment of an individualist system, as becomes apparent as soon as progressive taxation or trade union efforts to raise wages encroach upon profit.

In the matter of "ends," Mr. Hawtrey dissents from the assumption that "utility," as measured by the price which consumers are willing to offer, is related to consumers' welfare. Utility in this sense is not necessarily a "good"; and accordingly he abandons the idea that there is "a measurable aggregate of economic welfare." The consumers' choice is in practice limited by inertia and by ignorance, which provide a field for the advertiser actually to pervert his choice. Moreover, in addition to the fact of inequality which upsets price as an index of desire, an individualist system may tend to foster certain "false ends," such as the love of money for its own sake, the pursuit of national power, and the cultivation of purely conventional standards of consumption and display. An interesting survey of mercantilism and its modern successor, mercantile imperialism, selects them as outstanding instances of the dominance of power and of profit as aims, instead of welfare.

Finally, the book deals with Collectivism as an attempted solution of the problem. Collectivism has its origin in the attack on profit, or on the inequality which is inseparably linked with it; and a labour movement, finding itself con-

fronted with stern limitations in its attempts to raise wages, inevitably turns to Collectivism as a means of revolt against these limitations. This too is shown to have its own peculiar difficulties, partly from the administrative difficulty involved, but mainly from the fact that the device of the market would be largely abandoned in the fixing of wages and of prices, since the State would be the only seller in the retail market and the only buyer in the labour market. On what principle, then, are prices and output to be fixed? Moreover, what formerly operated by automatic substitution on the market will now have to be achieved through choices, complaints, and judgments formulated *linguistically*—a much slower and more difficult process.

The main value of the book, however, consists in suggesting rather than in solving problems. The economic problem falls into a number of separate problems, rather than supplies a single unifying principle; and as a result the book is much more a collection of ideas on many subjects loosely strung together than a closely woven whole. Indeed, one reaches the end with a feeling of some disappointment that high expectation should have been aroused in so many issues without the author's following through those issues to a satisfying conclusion. But, maybe, our disappointment only comes because of our greed of expectation. The fact that speculation is stimulated is, perhaps, more important than that riddles are left unexplained. Even some of the digressions over well-worn themes, such as Protection and export of capital, travel over familiar ground by so novel a route as to make the territory seem new. The work as a whole achieves much valuable surveying of the border-line of economics and its kindred subjects in a way which without any doubt brings "the subject into closer touch with the facts and interests of practical life."

THE REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS

Information on the Reduction of Armaments. By J. W. WHEELER-BENNETT, Jun. (Allen & Unwin. 10s. 6d.)

THE history of disarmament seems at first sight a discouraging record of failures and postponements. No constructive measure has been taken since the Washington Naval Convention; and one of the effects even of that has been to stimulate competition in the fields where no limitation was agreed upon. The League of Nations has set up expert commissions, reconstituted them, and set them up again, and has produced, one after another, schemes which seemed to one group of nations as wholly excellent as to another they were completely unacceptable. Over and over again it has been asserted that if the nations cannot disarm the League has failed, and whenever a proposal is rejected someone exultantly proclaims the League's futility.

The League will have failed when it gives up the task as hopeless, but not before. Each successive scheme has established some principle which is accepted as axiomatic in subsequent discussions. It has not yet succeeded in finding a watertight formula applicable to the widely different circumstances and points of view of all its members; but its experiments have served to lay bare the fundamental difficulties of the problem, and to elicit from reluctant States some at least of the reasons for their reluctance.

There is no denying the importance of the difficulties; but there is a real danger that, unless public opinion is insistent in its demand that they shall be overcome, Governments and experts may take the line of least resistance and declare them insuperable, and there is, therefore, need for information as to their nature. Mr. Wheeler-Bennett provides this information in the form of a collection of documents, admirably complete and well arranged, with such minimum of explanatory comment as is necessary where the arrangement does not explain itself. Beginning from the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, and the pledges given by the Allies in the League and elsewhere, his book covers the ground down to the resolutions of the Sixth Assembly—not, unfortunately, to the discussions in the Council of last December, where an old divergence of opinion reappeared in a new form. In addition to the main problem of general disarmament, he deals with the traffic in arms, chemical warfare, and demilitarized zones, and gives an interesting account of the efforts towards disarmament which have been made outside the League. As a work of reference this book is invaluable. No one interested in the problem of disarmament should be without it.

EARLY EDUCATION

✓ **On Education: Especially in Early Childhood.** By BERTRAND RUSSELL. (Allen & Unwin. 6s.)

MR. RUSSELL has written an interesting and useful book, a book which, we are sure, will be popular among young parents and young teachers, and will do much to spread rational ideas on education. It will be the more valuable because it strikes out no startlingly new ideas, but expounds clearly and arrestingly the views taken by educationists whose psychology is up-to-date.

Mr. Russell has, however, too original a mind not to present aspects of the case for modern education which are peculiarly his own. He is an optimist—an optimist of such vigour as to believe that vitality, courage, sensitiveness, and intelligence—"four characteristics which seem to me jointly to form the basis of an ideal character"—can be implanted in the young by education. It would be interesting to hand over to him a few children who, on grounds of heredity, might be expected to be stupid or insensitive, and see the results of his training upon them. The extraordinary differences in these characteristics between children brought up with the same care and attention, or the same lack of them, may perhaps excuse a little doubt as to the extent to which education affects character.

Apart, too, from the question of whether these qualities can be produced by education, Mr. Russell's choice of them as the basis of an ideal character shows at once the originality of his point of view. He has an amusing and provocative page in which "intelligence" and "virtue" are placed in antithesis to one another, and the evils of stupid goodness are wittily presented. Wicked, or even selfish, intelligence is not alluded to. It seems probable, however, that a really unselfish person, even if stupid, will do less damage, and, in the long run, be a pleasanter companion, than an intellectually brilliant egotist.

This is perhaps somewhat carping, for though Mr. Russell certainly stresses the importance of intelligence he by no means neglects the moral qualities. A rather more controversial side of this book is the emphasis he puts on the Montessori method of educating young children. He seems, for instance, to assume that it is a good thing for children to be able to read and write by the time they are five, and commends the Montessori method for bringing this about. Many educationists, however, are extremely doubtful as to the benefits of early reading, and consider that the time devoted to reading, writing, and number work in the Montessori schools could be much more fruitfully employed in other ways. We hear very little from Mr. Russell as to the importance of play and the play spirit in the early years, and this is the more to be regretted as many teachers seem to be forgetting the lessons of Froebel, and to be developing, even in infant schools, the cult of "efficiency." This omission is perhaps partly due to the fact that Mr. Russell is not aware of the direction in which the stream is flowing; from the general tone of the book we feel sure that he is, on this question, on the side of the angels.

It is perhaps dangerous to question anything Mr. Russell may say on the subject of mathematics, but, as a practical teacher, the present writer must express surprise at his views on algebra and geometry for children of ten to twelve. "A few boys and girls like geometry and algebra," he says, "but the great majority do not. I doubt if this is wholly due to faulty methods of teaching." If he had seen competently taught classes in good elementary and central schools, we cannot help thinking he would have changed his mind. Classes of children at ten and eleven frequently show the utmost enjoyment of algebra and geometry; the mere fact that they are no longer asked to perform wearisome calculations, but to pursue a logical train of thought, delights and stimulates them. The abstract nature of algebra no doubt constitutes a difficulty, but seldom an insuperable one, and though at this age, of course, only the elements can be grasped, still for those children who leave school at fourteen the elements are well worth having.

The bulk of Mr. Russell's book, however, deals with the education of young children—children, that is, of under five years of age. It is in consequence a most timely work, in view of the threat made by the Board of Education to reduce the grant payable to Local Authorities on behalf of these children from 36s. to 6s. a head. Lord Somers, the

official spokesman of the Board in the House of Lords said, in recent debate there, "The President of the Board is decidedly of the opinion that it is far more beneficial to the children to have a chance of being educated in a higher way than for them to spend at school what we regard as the somewhat unprofitable years between the ages of three and five." If there really are any persons interested in education outside the Board of Education who still think these years "somewhat unprofitable," let them read Mr. Russell.

CHINA NOW, YESTERDAY, AND FOREVER

What is Wrong with China? By RODNEY GILBERT. (Murray. 10s. 6d.)

THIS is an unusual book. As page one is left behind the reader looses hold on his preconceived opinions and mentally relaxes, letting Mr. Gilbert carry him along. But it will not do to be so complacent—the writer has too much conviction in his early pages to give room for argument, but long before the middle of the book is reached one is forced to smile a purely Chinese smile. Does the author inveigh too heartily against the Chinese among whom he has lived so long? Does he shatter too remorselessly those cherished ideals of Saxons, contradicting those telling slogans which epitomize Celestial life and thought? No, we cannot doubt Mr. Gilbert's sincerity and honesty of purpose; we smile because this catalogue of Chinese shortcomings is written in so thoroughly Chinese a fashion. The book is written from "glorious Devon," before its author returns to the "land of turbulence and all disorder," but it would have come more naturally from a Chinese brush in the Forest of Pencils in Peking. Mr. Gilbert maintains that logical argument is an impossibility with the Chinese: his own book, from beginning to end, is a brilliant example of China's power in cultural conquest; his arguments are not merely logical, they are Chinese in their penetration and comprehensiveness.

As with many another book on modern China, the title is unfortunate. "Those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know," wrote the old sage twenty-six centuries ago. There may be those who know what is wrong with China, but so far they are dumb. Upon those who dwell within the limits of that country descend many mantles; loquacity is the earliest and silence the last.

Mr. Gilbert is very plausible. It is almost impossible to believe that he can be wrong when one has followed him closely through his first chapter. Then one remembers the wars between the early Chinese orthodox and heterodox philosophers. Read Yang Chu carefully, and you are convinced by his specious logic that he is right, but if you follow Yang Chu, there is no room for Confucius. Confucius can convince you by argument that the nature of man is radically good, and Mo-ti is equally logical and convincing when he shows you that it is bad. Mr. Gilbert will carry conviction, perhaps, with most of his readers up to page 83, but his heresy goes a little too far in Essay III., devoted to the Chinese language and letters. He makes the dangerous admission that he is "not a sinologue, but knows enough Chinese to rub along on," and then devotes forty pages to a discussion of the nature of the Chinese language and the standing and worth of Chinese literature. He calls the Chinese colloquial a "primitive baby-language," adducing as proof the fact that European babies learn to speak it more readily than their mother-tongue. Since young children are constantly tended by native nurses, this is not surprising. Because Chinese is monosyllabic it by no means follows that it is either primitive or absurdly simple. Perhaps Mr. Gilbert has not read Professor Karlgren's essay, "Le Proto-Chinois, langue flexionelle," in which it is shown that Chinese was once an inflected tongue like Aryan languages, but has come down to us as the most overdeveloped and decayed speech system in the world. English, a far from perfect language, is heading the same way, but is several thousands of years behind.

The book is well worth reading, but should by no means be used as a text-book. There are too many generalizations and exaggerations for it to claim authority, and while the author is obviously sincere in his quest for the medicine which will cure all China's ills, he has failed to avoid many of the traps which lie in the path of the most wary writer on things Chinese. Where is the man of perfect comprehension?

A. C. BENSON

Rambles and Reflections. By A. C. BENSON. (Murray. 10s. 6d.)

THE present reviewer will never forget his surprise when, as a very young man, he first met A. C. Benson and found, instead of the small, mild, dreamy recluse of his fancy, a tall, sportsmanlike figure in tweeds, virile, caustic, and with even a hint of sternness. The contradiction between the man and his books has been emphasized by many of Benson's friends; and his comparatively premature death is the more to be regretted because it seems that at last, just when it might least have been expected, he was succeeding in getting more of his true personality into his writings. His posthumous novel has already received high praise from another pen in these columns, and some of the present essays, written during the last two years of his life, are unquestionably the best he ever produced. They confirm Mr. E. F. Benson's statement that his brother, "after his complete recovery from the cloud of depression which had shadowed him," was "busier and took more pleasure in life than ever before."

Pleasure is abundantly evident in the chapters describing rambles in Sussex, Cornwall, and elsewhere—pleasure not merely of the mistily poetical kind, but keen, precise, objective interest in the colour and form of landscape, in geology, botany, and archaeology. There is, too, in these pages a sprightlier humour than one had come to associate with the author of "The House of Quiet." It bubbles up in "Ill in Bed"—a true "essay" in the strict sense—and illuminates not only with gaiety, but with a kind of inspired moderation, the recorded conversations with young literary friends in which Benson does battle with the "moderns," voluntarily conceding some of their claims, but stoutly refusing complete surrender. It was, after all, Benson who anticipated, many years ago, the now popular view of Tennyson which Mr. Harold Nicolson has crystallized; and it can only have been because of the reams of placid moralizing among which they were wont to be lost that the literary judgments of the late Master of Magdalene were taken less seriously than they sometimes deserved.

From suave, ambling platitude the present book is comparatively free. There is, of course, an undercurrent of the familiar Bensonian philosophy. But it is less obtrusive, and, where it does come to the surface, it springs up with greater energy and clarity than in the earlier books. Here, perhaps, in a paragraph, is the essence of the author's "message":—

"The artisticism of which I speak is dangerous because it hides from men the quality of beauty, by divorcing it from life. It makes men think that beauty is a thing, when it is really a principle which runs through life; and the moment that one thinks of beauty as a series of sensations procurable by a series of objects, that moment the nature of beauty is hidden from us, because beauty must grow outwards from an inner vitality, as the velvety cheek of the peach is evolved from its rugged core; it cannot be applied like rouge to a jaded face, to simulate health. Beauty is, indeed, the last outcome of healthy living, and cannot be the gilding of the rotten panel."

A. C. Benson was neither original nor profound. But he had a large experience of certain aspects of life; he felt intensely; and he was less devoid of ideas than some of his writings might suggest. This final volume will serve his memory well, and will make it less easy for future critics to dismiss him as a mere facile sentimentalist.

A PAMPHLET ON ARBITRATION

The Victory of Reason. By W. ARNOLD-FORSTER. (Hogarth Press, 2s.)

ARBITRATION cannot be called a popular subject. It is easy enough to make emotional speeches on the text, "What we seek is the reign of Law"; but when it comes to explaining practical issues there seems to be nothing for the imagination to fix on. The man in the street may not understand the technical intricacies of disarmament, but at least the word calls up a definite picture in his mind; "arbitration" suggests long discourses by venerable lawyers on abstruse legal points which he cannot understand and does not particularly want to. No doubt that is the reason why, in spite of the importance of the question, a

popular pamphlet about it has been so long in appearing.

At last, however, Mr. Arnold-Forster has faced the problem of making interesting the apparently dull, and real and vital the apparently remote. His success is complete. Where technicalities have previously seemed inevitable, he is perfectly simple and lucid; and yet not colourless, as so many writers become when they are determined to be comprehensible. The letter from Benjamin Franklin on the subject of duelling, which stands as preface to the book, is a happy thought; and happier still the absence of comment on it.

The real object of the pamphlet is to advocate the acceptance by this country of the obligatory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice—though the uninitiated reader would be astonished to see it expressed in those terms. Mr. Arnold-Forster leads up to his point by tracing the development of arbitration to the position at the present day. His explanation of the aims and provisions of the Geneva Protocol is the clearest that has yet been made, particularly as regards the arbitral procedure which it set up. If only some such statement had been published a year and a-half ago, that most misunderstood of all international documents might at least have been judged on its merits, and not condemned for reasons more or less irrelevant to its main purpose.

The case for signing the Optional Clause has been heard before, of course; but it has rarely been stated so clearly or so cogently. As an eye-witness at the Sixth Assembly of the League, Mr. Arnold-Forster observed, what others have deduced, the bad effect produced on European public opinion by our refusal. He rightly emphasizes the point that the issue is psychological perhaps even more than technical. No foreign country thinks that we are reserving the right not to play fair because we are at this moment meditating foul play; but they all wonder uneasily what we do want.

Some advocates of compulsory arbitration would like us to accept it without reservations. Mr. Arnold-Forster agrees that we should make the two generally regarded as essential—covering action taken by the British Navy on the League's behalf, and disputes arising between members of the British Commonwealth. He does not, however, face the real difficulty of the Dominions, which is not that they do not want their disputes with us to go before the Court, but that they do not want them reserved. That point has never yet been faced, and it is time that Great Britain did face it instead of sheltering behind unconvincing excuses.

THE UNKNOWN MAMMOTH

The Mammoth. By BASSETT DIGBY, F.R.G.S. (Witherby. 12s. 6d.)

THE literature of the Mammals has produced many books of merely ephemeral interest, and much that is quite negligible. But it is long since a better book of this kind has appeared, for it contains a wide and varied appeal, and is packed with excellent reading. The mammoth ceased to exist some fifteen thousand years ago, after having inhabited the earth for about half a million years; nevertheless, both he and his contemporary, the woolly rhinoceros, are still occasionally seen in the flesh, when after untold centuries of cold storage an ice-bound pit or river bank crumbles away and discloses in its frozen grave the giant skeleton of the mammoth.

In the course of a most interesting survey Mr. Bassett Digby describes the occasion and condition of these discoveries, some twenty all told; attested and documented stories, but which obviously do not account for all the ancient mammoth graves that have been seen by native eyes only.

The popular belief that the extinction of the mammoth was due to sudden change of climate, in which intense cold was supposed to have frozen the most warmly clad of all mammals, or, on the other hand, to the sudden cutting off of the food supplies, will not stand investigation according to the author. There is, indeed, no direct evidence that the climate of Northern Siberia has changed so tremendously since the mammoth roamed there, and so far as the food supplies go, the flora is no different to-day from what it was when the mammoth lived on the grass and pine-cones, as the

contents of its stomach prove. The question therefore arises as to the agency which wiped out this primitive elephant. To the question Mr. Digby answers: "Man!" He argues that it was man, who during the greater part of the half million years of the mammoth's existence roamed across the earth with him, and, ceaselessly persecuting him, drove him at last into the Siberian wilderness of snow and ice, where finally he was exterminated. The contention of Mr. Digby regarding the few chilled bodies laid bare for man's inspection, is that the beast fell into snow-filled crevasses and dug his own grave, thus perishing in cold storage. The great majority of the dead mammoths who died either from violence or old age were not so preserved, but were devoured by palæolithic hunters or by carnivorous beasts, or, if drawn into the marshes, they rotted away altogether. The author's most forcible argument against the theory of catastrophic cold is the fact that only mammoths and a few woolly rhinoceroses are found in a frozen state; for why did not the imaginary catastrophe freeze also the sabre-toothed tiger, the lion, the bear, and so on?

To many readers the most interesting pages of the book will be those in which is told the story of the living mammoth and the men whose weapons have been found associated with his bones, and whose cave paintings of the great beast are known to us.

ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

"ROMANTIC FRANCE," by Eleanor Elsner (Jenkins, 10s. 6d.), is a book, half travel book, half guide book, devoted to Provence. "Courts and Camps in India, Impressions of Vice-Regal Tours," by Yvonne Fitzroy (Methuen, 16s.), is half autobiography, half travel book, describing four years of travel in India with the Vice-Regal household of Lord Reading.

In "A Chapter in the Early Life of Shakespeare," Arthur Gray, the Master of Jesus College, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.), puts forward a hypothesis that Shakespeare spent part of his youth as a page at Polesworth Hall in Warwickshire. Another literary book just published is "The Classical Age of German Literature, 1748-1805," by L. A. Willoughby (Oxford University Press, 4s. 6d.).

"The Secret of Lourdes," by Stuart Martin (Parsons, 7s. 6d.), is the result of an inquiry into the miraculous cures said to take place at Lourdes.

"Evolution and Creation," by Sir Oliver Lodge (Hodder & Stoughton, 3s. 6d.), is yet another book which seeks "to reconcile the scientific and religious or theological points of view."

Among French books recently published are: "La Pierre d'Horeb," by Georges Duhamel (Mercure de France, 9fr.); "Le Cardinal Fleury et le Mouvement Janséniste," by Georges Hardy (Champion, 35fr.); "André Chénier et la Poésie Parnassienne," by C. Kramer (Champion, 25fr.); "Œuvres de J.-Fr. Sarasin" (Champion, two vols., 45fr.); "Le Génie au Milieu des Brutes," by Jean Raphanel (Maximin Roll) (Stock, 10fr.).

BOOKS IN BRIEF

The Memoirs of Susan Sibbald. Edited, with an Introduction, by her Great-grandson, FRANCIS PAGET HETT. (The Bodley Head. 18s.)

It would be misleading to say that Mrs. Sibbald's Memoirs throw light upon what are generally called historical figures, or cause us to revise our estimate of history. A few peers occur in her pages; several sea captains and an occasional Academician turn up, but, to tell the truth (and it is not a truth to be ashamed of), Mrs. Sibbald's life was spent obscurely in the wide obscurity of the upper middle classes, and it is for its sprightly and unconstrained record of that section of society that its pages must be praised. She lived from 1783 to 1866. Her account of her first years is extremely minute, but, if you have a liking for adding up a myriad trifles until they compose a considerable sum, not at all too long, and not at all too trifling. She could remember practically everything that happened to her at school, and, writing to amuse a son, had no shame in going into the minutest particulars. So we learn exactly how a dog was buried under a tree; how a boy was rude in a

field; how an old woman sold tarts; what fun it was when the girls hid under the beds, and Miss Harriet came in, and "who on earth could resist from laughter to see Meyrick crawling out like a tortoise." Also we are told how Governor Yeo crushed every eggshell after breakfast, being of opinion that witches went to sea in them and caused shipwrecks; how perhaps nobody in the whole world ever annoyed her as did Mrs. Gibb; how polkas and galops are in her opinion perfectly void of propriety, and who can wonder at the decay of the world when gentlemen no longer wear shoes and buckles and an opera hat to go to the opera? So the busy, happy life of Susan Sibbald runs away, and we are quite put out when she bethinks her it is time to stop.

My Crowded Solitude. By JACK McLAREN. (Fisher Unwin. 12s. 6d.)

This is better written and more interesting than the average travel-book. Mr. McLaren decided to start a coconut plantation at Cape York in the extreme north of Australia. He carried his enterprise through, but it entailed living eight years by himself far away from all civilization. He tells his story of the struggle with nature and of his relations with the natives very well. Particularly good, for instance, is his account of how the wanderlust suddenly came upon the tribe which worked for him, and of the explanation of it which the native woman, "Mary Brown," gave him. Altogether a book worth reading.

Control on the Railways. By PHILIP BURTT. (Allen & Unwin. 12s. 6d.)

At the present time when this country is having a hard struggle to retain its position in world trade as an exporting nation, any study relating to the efficiency of a key-industry is especially welcome. The more opportune is the publication of this work, as it throws considerable light on the methods which the British railways are using in their efforts to make their working more economical. The main objective is the increase of margin between revenue and expenditure, or, expressed in more technical terms, the reduction of the operating ratio.

This book, which benefits from a plentiful supply of photographs, diagrams, and reproductions of the actual forms at present in use, brings out clearly the progress which has recently been achieved by methods of centralized and district controls. It also gives the reader the impression that there are many problems of internal railway organisation for which, as yet, no satisfactory solution has been found.

With the reorganization into four large groups, which was forced upon the railways by the Act of 1921, it is only natural that one of the greatest problems facing the British railways is the question of internal organization, and this, as Mr. Burt very clearly shows, resolves itself primarily into a question of control, both of staff and of train and traffic movements. Such questions as the control of overtime, and the psychological effect of the imposition of centralization upon the man on the spot, who has been accustomed to take decisions upon his own initiative, are dealt with at length, and the advantage of a wider viewpoint against the tendency to avoid taking responsibility is carefully balanced. This work will be welcome not only to students of railway transport, but also to railway officers themselves.

A Lily of Old France. By ERIC REDE BUCKLEY. (Witherby 10s. 6d.)

This is a life of Marie Leckzinska, wife of Louis XV. of France. It was well worth writing, for there is less about her in English than about many of the wives and mistresses of French kings. The story of this Polish princess is a sad one, for she led a wretched life at the French Court, and Louis XV., who suffered from chronic boredom, was one of the most intolerable monarchs who ever lived. There is, however, a good deal of extremely interesting material about her. Mr. Buckley has used it judiciously, and has written a book which is easy to read and which yet contains a good deal of historical information.

Almost Human. By ROBERT M. YERKES. (Cape. 12s. 6d.)

The author of this book is Professor of Psychology at Yale University, and it deals with the large collection of apes which is kept by Senora Rosalia Abreu on her estate in Cuba. The species of ape principally studied is the chimpanzee, though a certain amount of information is also given with regard to gorillas and other species. The book is easy to read by non-experts, and is fairly interesting, but it is rather disappointing. It has none of the scientific precision of Koehler's admirable book on the mentality of apes, and it tends to be wordy and woolly. It has, however, a large number of very good photographs.

OXFORD BOOKS

THE past year has been remarkable in the history of the Oxford Press for the variety of its publications.

This list shows only a very few of the general books issued.

THE OXFORD BOOK OF ENGLISH PROSE. Edited by Sir A. Quiller-Couch. 8s 6d. net. India Paper, 10s. net

NEW VERSE. By Robert Bridges. 6s. net

THE DIARY OF A COUNTRY PARSON. Edited by John Beresford. Vol. I. 1758-1781. Vol. II. 1782-1787. 12s. 6d. net each

TRAVEL IN ENGLAND IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. By Joan Parkes. 21s. net

LIFE IN MEDIÆVAL FRANCE. By Joan Evans. 15s. net

ESSAYS IN BIOGRAPHY. By Bonamy Dobrée. 12s. 6d. net

THE POEMS OF RICHARD LOVELACE. Edited by C. H. Wilkinson. 2 volumes. 105s. net

BORDER BALLADS. Illustrated with woodcuts by D. P. Bliss. 12s. 6d. net

ROMAN ARCHITECTURE. By G. T. Rivoira. 105s. net

EAST CHRISTIAN ART. By O. M. Dalton. 105s. net

A STATE TRADING ADVENTURE. By F. H. Collier. 12s. 6d. net

FOUR CENTURIES OF MODERN IRAQ. By S. H. Longrigg. 21s. net

A SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, 1924. By A. J. Toynbee. 25s. net

THE PEOPLE AND THE BOOK. Edited by A. S. Peake. 10s. net

IT will begin the new publishing year well by issuing, on the 22nd April

A DICTIONARY OF MODERN ENGLISH USAGE

By H. W. Fowler 7s. 6d. net

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Paths to World Peace

By BOLTON C. WALLER, B.A. 5s.

The author was the winner of the British Commonwealth Filene Prize of £1,000 for essays on the Restoration of Peace in Europe.

The International Anarchy. 1904-1914

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"It is very much the best analysis of the international events leading to the Great War, which has so far appeared."—*Nation*.

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JEAN LENSEN AND HIS ORCHESTRA: Paderewski: Minuet in G. Op. 14, No. 1.; and E di Capua: Maria—Mari (10 in. record. 3896. 3s.)

These two pieces are pleasantly played on strings and piano. The Minuet is graceful without being very original. The other piece is pleasantly sentimental and tuneful.

SIR EDWARD ELGAR: "Land of Hope and Glory" and "Pomp and Circumstance" March. Played by the Regimental Band of H. M. Grenadier Guards, with vocal choruses by soloists and full chorus. 12 in. record. 9080. 4s. 6d.)

This is a brass band *par excellence*, and the record can be safely recommended to all who like plenty of sound on the gramophone. It is really tremendous in volume, and even the voices seem to be more than humanly loud.

SCHUBERT: "The Brooklet," and SENALLIE-SALMON: "Allemande." 'Cello solos played by W. H. Squire, with piano. (10 in. record. D1538. 4s. 6d.)

"The Brooklet" is a charming piece for the 'cello, and reminds one of the beginning of the charming scherzo in Schubert's Trio for piano, violin, and 'cello, Op. 100. Mr. Squire does it full justice. The other piece on this record is not as satisfactory. It is a pleasant enough piece of music, but the 'cello comes out rather harsh and scrappy.

DVORAK-KREISLER: Slav Dance No. 2, and H. WIENIAWSKI: Scherzo—Tarantelle. Op. 16. Violin solos, played by Mayer Gordon, with piano. (12 in. record. 9081. 4s. 6d.)

As a mere performer on the violin Mayer Gordon is extremely good, but it is a pity that these brilliant executants do not play more interesting music. The Wieniawski shows off the extraordinary skill of the violinist, but in the process the violin is necessarily compelled to make noises which that instrument should never be required to make. The acrobatics are interrupted occasionally by passages which show the difference when the violin is allowed, in the hands of an expert, to make its own delicious music. The Slav dance is equally well played, and is much more pleasant to listen to; it has more music in it.

REVIEWS AND MAGAZINES

THE findings of the Coal Commission provide the text for most important articles on Home Affairs in the journals this month. Mr. Arthur Greenwood, M.P., in the "Socialist Review," discusses the Report in relation to the proposals submitted to the Commission by the Miners' Federation. Mr. Greenwood decides that the Commission is in agreement with Labour views concerning the present waste of coal, and also about the future of the industry, but the constructive suggestions of the Commission appear to him to be "over-cautious and timid." Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, in an article which has pride of place in the "Contemporary Review," agrees with Mr. Greenwood in approving the diagnosis, and in distrusting the cure put forward by the Commission. "The parrot-cry has gone up," he writes, "that these recommendations must be taken as a whole. . . . But even if they are taken as a whole, they offer no escape from disaster. For they have an unbridgable gap, which will be confronted next May when the subsidy will stop like the stopping of a clock." In the "Review of Reviews" Mr. Wickham Steed prints an interview with Lord Londonderry, who expresses the opinion that "the more we can keep abstract theory, political or economic, out of this

business the better," and speaks a little vaguely about the future, and the necessity for "all branches of the industry to get together and to pull together. . . ." The same paper has an article by Mr. Roy Devereux on Co-partnership in Industry, embodying the evidence prepared for the Commission by the Labour Co-partnership Association. In the "Empire Review" Mr. Frank Hodges describes the Report as a document which, for a clear exposition of the economic facts confronting the British Mining Industry, has no equal in the whole range of literature relating to the industry, and concludes his examination of the recommendations with the remark that the responsibility for bringing order out of disorder has been thrown back upon the Government on the one hand, and upon the owners and workers on the other. Mr. Lawton, in the "Fortnightly," makes a most pessimistic contribution. ". . . the Coal Commission," he writes, "has been a lamentable waste of time, and an altogether needless proceeding. . . . What the situation called for was not a Royal Commission . . . but a small committee of scientists and business men to devise a practical and immediate plan for the utilization of our coal resources in accordance with modern technical development." Other articles on Home Affairs are "British Industries and the Indian Market," by Sir Reginald Craddock, and "Rival Land Policies," by Sir Henry Rew (both in the "Nineteenth Century"), "The Liberal Land Policy," by Professor Ramsay Muir ("Contemporary Review"), "Mr. Lloyd George goes back to the Land," by "Investigator" ("Socialist Review").

The thunderstorm at Geneva is still reverberating. Mr. Wilson Harris has an article on the subject in the "Contemporary Review," and, in the same paper, Mr. George Glasgow gives the greater part of space in his monthly discussion of Foreign Affairs to an acute examination of the mind of Sir Austen Chamberlain, as revealed in his policy before and during the meeting at Geneva. When the main facts are set down in the right order, it becomes increasingly evident, he writes, "that the main blunder was one of method rather than of motive, on the part of Sir Austen Chamberlain. . . . Sir Austen has the broad defects of his broad qualities. Last year the Locarno project appeared to be utterly hopeless. . . . Sir Austen, however, had started out for Locarno, and nothing in heaven or earth could deflect him. . . . In 1925 Sir Austen slogged along the right road, and got there. In 1926 he was on the wrong road, and, slogged as he did, he only went further astray." In the "Fortnightly," "Augur" points out the futility of practising secret diplomacy in connection with League affairs.

Dr. G. P. Gooch writes admirably on "The Revelations of Colonel House" in the "Contemporary Review," Mr. Wickham Steed has an article on the same subject in the "Review of Reviews," and the first part of an article, advertised as "Wilson v. House," by "Scrutator," appears in the "Empire Review." "The Dispute between Chile and Peru," by Mr. W. A. Hirst ("Contemporary") describes the origins of a South American situation which has not yielded to arbitration. Mr. Robert Crozier Long contributes "A Letter from Berlin" to the "Fortnightly," on "Investors and Germany," and MM. André and Adrien Paulian ("Nineteenth Century") discuss the question: "Is France making for a Dictatorship?"

Two papers, in the "Empire" and the "Contemporary" Reviews respectively, deal with a subject which has excited much general attention in the last few months. "Medical Practice by the Unqualified" ("Empire Review") is a report made by the "Lancet" of Lord Dawson's address to the members of Parliament on the Medical Profession, the General Medical Council, and the Public, with the points raised in subsequent debate. Sir Herbert Barker's "Medical Practice for the Unqualified" ("Contemporary Review") is, in effect, a reply, and a very adequate reply, to such of Lord Dawson's observations as affected his particular case. A letter to the "Nineteenth Century," from E. T. Pheils, a qualified osteopath, gives the third point of view in the discussion.

This quarter's "Review of English Studies" has "Some Notes on Ben Jonson's Works," by Dr. W. W. Greg, and the second part of a paper on "The Development of English Colloquial Idioms during the Eighteenth Century," by Miss Joan Platt.

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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

LONDON AND NEW YORK—OIL.

TRADING on the London and New York Stock Exchanges presents once again a striking contrast. On this side there is depression without slump, and on the other side there is slump with fury. No serious paper losses could have been suffered on the London Stock Exchange in the last month. Whether stockbrokers' expenses were covered does not greatly matter. Business was slack but, contrary to popular impression, markets generally were firm. The INVESTORS' CHRONICLE index for all securities on March 29th (100=December 31st, 1923) was 117.4, against 117.6 on February 26th, 119.6 on January 29th, and 121.7 (the peak) on December 31st. Last month there was a further slight depreciation in the gilt-edged group, which is now in process of recovery under the lead of 5 per cent. War Loan (which goes ex-dividend on the 26th of this month), in investment stocks such as railway and industrial debentures, and in banks and insurance shares. The indices for commercial and industrial shares are also slightly lower with the exception of breweries, newspaper, and some miscellaneous shares such as Associated Cement, British Aluminium, British-American Tobacco, and Dunlops. It is worth remarking that the index for gas and electrical shares is back, after a loss of 4.9 points, to the level of August last, while that for silk shares, after a decline of 6.6 points to 190.2, compares badly with its peak of 224.2 reached at the end of November. The index for all securities on March 29th would have been much lower had it not been for the rise in the speculative group. The index for rubber shares showed a rise of 19 points to 211.7 (against a peak of 248.3 on December 31st last), while that for tin shares at 197.4 reached a new high record with a rise of 14.8 points. The stagnation in the London stock markets has been due as much to the excess of new issues as to the influence of the budgetary and coal problems. We might hazard the guess that by the end of April markets will begin to show signs of recovery, if only because the capital market is now having some respite.

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In New York, the heavy selling of industrial securities developed actually towards the end of February, and by March 4th the average price of fifty representative stocks showed a decline of 20 points from the high figure established on February 13th. From this point a rally was made, and about half the loss was recovered, but again a decline set in and a new low record was established by the end of March, with a decline of 28.5 points from the peak of February 13th. This was technically described in Wall Street as a "secondary decline." The extent to which trading on the New York Stock Exchange is influenced by considerations of curves, by merely looking at major and minor swings up and down a piece of squared paper, is hard for us to conceive. The selling in February really started on the assumption that the peak of the "curve" (what curve it was did not matter) had been reached. This view was, no doubt, prompted by the Federal Reserve Board calling on January 19th for a statement of loans secured by Stock Exchange collateral from member banks in the New York district. At any rate, the liquidation in the stock markets was duly reflected in the decline of brokers' loans. On March 24th these loans showed a reduction of \$448,660,000 from the level of \$3,138,609,000 reached on February 17th, a decline of 14 per cent. The bankers' first statement of brokers' loans served no doubt to show that speculation in the stock markets had become excessive. The prices of some stocks had, of course, been carried to crazy heights, particularly the stocks of some public utilities through the operations of "pools." For example, the \$100 ordinary stock of the General Electric Company was sold this year as high as \$386½, partly on the belief that the stock was to be split up. The stock is now down to \$305, at which price the yield is still

only £2 12s. 6d. per cent. on the basis of current dividends of 8 per cent. per annum.

It is important to observe that the liquidation in Wall Street has not so far affected bonds and other purely investment stocks, and that it did not follow upon any break in the industrial position. Certainly the unfilled orders of the United States Steel Corporation reached a peak figure at the end of December and declined during both January and February, but in the building industry there has been so far little sign of slackening, and if building as a whole keeps up, the steel industry should experience no big reaction. The collapse of the Florida land boom is, after all, limited to one corner of a vast continent. Moreover, railway-car loadings point to a maintenance of good business. There may be a slackening in American business in the next few months, but the idea of a sudden and severe slump is not warranted by the strong financial condition of the country. Business conditions in America should, however, be watched carefully by the investor on this side. In so far as a reaction in American industry leads to a decline in the world prices of rubber, oil, tin, copper, &c., speculative securities on the London Stock Exchange (rubber, oil, tin, and other metal shares reacting to American commodity prices) would be badly affected. The following table shows the extent of the liquidation (compared with that in London) up to the end of the last month. The figures are those of the ECONOMIC REVIEW, and represent the course of prices for a representative number of industrial stocks and long-dated railroad bonds in New York, for twenty representative industrial ordinary stocks in London, and for a selected number of long-dated British Government securities. In all cases the price at December 30th, 1921, is taken as 100.

Week ending (1926)	In New York.		In London.	
	Industrials	Bonds	Industrials	Gilt-edged*
January 9 ...	196.1	103.6	135.1	113.1
February 6 ...	197.3	104.7	131.7	114.7
" 13 ...	199.9	104.9	132.0	114.8
" 20 ...	198.4	105.9	129.8	114.6
" 27 ...	190.4	105.6	129.1	114.3
March 6 ...	184.8	104.7	129.1	114.0
" 13 ...	195.1	105.1	127.1	113.7
" 20 ...	178.5	105.1	126.6	113.6
" 27 ...	171.4	105.1	127.4	113.6

* Prices averaged exclusive of accrued interest.

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The oil situation in America is not as bright (for the oil companies) as it was a month ago. Oil production has been rising, while petrol consumption has fallen short of the estimates. Petrol prices have weakened in consequence. It is worth remarking that in the last three years, during which an enormous expansion of American business has taken place, the rate of increase in American consumption and exports of oil (representing together 80 per cent. of the world's oil trade) has been declining. This increase was 23 per cent. in 1923, 6.8 per cent. in 1924, and 3.4 per cent. in 1925. The increase in petrol consumption in the same years was 24 per cent., 16.3 per cent., and 21 per cent. These statistics suggest that the industrial use of petroleum has found its limit except in the case of refined petroleum spirit (petrol), the supply of which has been disproportionately increasing by reason of technical improvements in refining. Writing on March 6th we suggested that until the results of the larger drilling operations that are now being undertaken are known, it was not wise to take too long a view of the oil industry. The best speculative purchase in the oil market remains Mexican Eagle, if only because there is a chance of a real settlement between the oil companies and the Mexican Government on the question of oil titles. We can authoritatively deny the rumour that Standard Oil are negotiating with the Shell group for V.O.C. control. Another Venezuelan property of the Shell group may however be the subject of negotiation.

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